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The Priesthood of Christ as the controlling theme
of the Epistle to the Hebrews

Joy D. Tetley

A thesis presented to the University of Durham for the degree of Ph.D.

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Abstract of Thesis

The Priesthood of Christ as the controlling theme in the Epistle to the Hebrews

The author's understanding of Christ as High priest was a new apprehension, both for himself and for the community addressed. It was not, however, created out of nothing, but owed much to the background and circumstances of writer and recipients. Nevertheless, as the author perceived it, it was revolutionary in its theological implications. For him the High Priesthood of Jesus drew together and transcended a great many Christological strands, thus providing a unitive and inclusive category of interpretation which broke new ground. Above all, it pointed to the fundamental character of God, for, in the author's perception, Jesus the High Priest was the definitive self-expression of the living God.

Such a perception opened up interesting and surprising theological perspectives, not least with regard to God's vulnerability and willingness to break his own rules. It also united the writer's own theocentricity and devotion to Jesus, whilst (in his view) powerfully addressing the dangerous spiritual condition of his community.

The first two chapters are the foundation of this 'word of exhortation'. They provide the key to the author's understanding of the High Priesthood of Jesus. At the same time, they demonstrate the author's preaching skill and pastoral concern for his community in building on existing perceptions so as to draw them into his new way of 'seeing Jesus' as High Priest. This comprehensive 'vision' first came to him in the context of worship, and the 'Epistle' in which he carefully expresses his vision was intended to be delivered as a homily at the community's (eucharistic?) worship assembly.

AG	(Walter Bauer's) Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated and adapted by W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich (Chicago/Cambridge, 1957)
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
BZNW	Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
EQ	Evangelical Quarterly
ET	English Translation
EVV	English Versions
Exp.T.	Expository Times
FS	Festschrift
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
LXX	Septuagint version of the OT
Migne PG	Patrologia, Series Graeca, edited by J.P. Migne (Paris 1844-)
NEB	New English Bible
NovT	Novum Testamentum
NRT	Nouvelle Revue Théologique
NTS	New Testament Studies
par	[and] parallels
PTA	Princeton Theological Review
RSV	Revised Standard Version
Rev Q	Revue de Qumrân
S-B	Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash von H.L. Strack und P. Billerbeck
S.B.L.	Society of Biblical Literature
TDNT	(G. Kittel's and G. Friedrich's) Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, translated by G. Bromiley, 10 vol. (Grand Rapids, 1964-76)
TWVB	Theological Word Book of the Bible, ed. A. Richardson, London 1957

Chapter 1

The Priesthood of Christ in Hebrews: an introductory survey of the spectrum of commentary opinion

1.1 Introductory

"Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people" (2:17)¹.

It is evident that the priesthood of Christ was an interpretative category of vital significance for the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. He approaches the concept with a controlled and carefully argued enthusiasm which, besides perhaps illuminating something of his own personality, also points to the fundamental importance he attached to communicating his message. But whence came his notion of Christ as our great High Priest, for he is the only N.T. author to use this category explicitly? Was it the starting-point and foundation of his theology - or was it perhaps the culminating expression of it? How is the concept worked out through the structure of the Epistle? How does it relate to other Christological explorations current in the early church? What does it imply about God? How far is the author of Hebrews original in his thinking? Such questions need close attention in any attempt to get towards the heart of what is a profound, theological document - whose author remains as stubbornly mysterious as the Melchizedek figure he sets before us.

What, then, have commentators said about the author's use of the priesthood category? How do they deal with the questions set out above - if, indeed, they ask them? We shall look at a representative sample from differing centuries and traditions, seeking to highlight the major issues they raise.



1.2 John Chrysostom

Chrysostom (c. 350-407) is the first commentator whose work has survived in any extensive form. His *Homilies on Hebrews*² are a lively and vigorous mixture of textual comment and pastoral exhortation (not unlike the Epistle itself). They are also deeply influenced by Chrysostom's own doctrinal position - particularly his commitment to the Nicene principle of Christ's being ὁμοούσιος τῷ Πατρί and his predilection for the Antiochene approach to the understanding of Christ's incarnate Person³. For Chrysostom, as for all the Greek commentators, it was unthinkable that the divine Logos should experience weakness and suffering. Such passibility was totally foreign to that Godhead with which the Logos was ὁμοούσιος. It therefore had to be attributed to the "flesh" of Christ. Thus, commenting on 2:18, Chrysostom declares, *καίτοι, γε ἀπαθὴς ὁ Θεὸς ἐστίν· ἀλλὰ τὰ τῆς σαρκώσεως ἐνταῦθα διηγείται· ὡς ἂν εἰ ἔλεγε· καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ σὰρξ ἡ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολλὰ δεινὰ ἔπαθεν*

⁴. It followed that Christ's priesthood must similarly be associated with his humanity rather than with his divinity. So, on 7:11-14, we read

*καὶ Θεὸς τὸ μυστήριον Πρῶτον μὲν ἦν βασιλική, καὶ νῦν γέγονεν ἱερατική. ὡπεροῦν καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ· βασιλεὺς μὲν γὰρ ἦν αἰεὶ, ἱερεὺς δὲ γέγονεν, ὅτε τὴν σάρκα ἀνέλαβεν, ὅτε τὴν Θουσίαν προσήγαγεν.*⁵

Christ's kingship is an eternal feature of his divine nature but his priesthood is a consequence of his incarnation and death, a feature of his manhood. This is also true of Christ's heavenly ministry of intercession. Commenting on Hebrews' assertion that "he ever lives to make intercession for them", Chrysostom asks, *Ὁρᾷς ὅτι εἰς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα τοῦτο φησὶν; --- Ὁρᾷς ὅσον τὸ ταπεινὸν εἶπε διὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα.*

⁶. Such pleading is not worthy of the divine Word who sits and reigns at the right hand of the Father. Thus, despite Chrysostom's protest-

ation to the contrary⁷, Christ is, in effect, divided, in heaven as well as on earth.

There is no doubt in Chrysostom's mind that Christ's priestly act of sacrifice was made "once for all". In Homily XIII, for example, he declares,

Οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλη Θυσία· μία ἡμᾶς ἐκαθάρισε· μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο πῦρ καὶ γέννα, καὶ γὰρ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἄνω καὶ κάτω στρέφει λέγων, ἓνα ἱερέα, μίαν Θυσίαν, ἵνα μή τις, νομίζων πολλὰς εἶναι ἁδεῶς ἁμαρτάνῃ.

•. Neither is the unique character of Christ's death called into question by the offering of the eucharistic sacrifice: Τί οὖν; ἡμεῖς καθ' ἐκαστην ἡμέραν οὐ προσφέρομεν; Προσφέρομεν, ἀλλ' ἀνάμνησιν ποιούμενοι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ· καὶ μία ἐστὶν αὕτη, καὶ οὐ πολλαί. Πῶς μία, καὶ οὐ πολλαί; Ἐπειδὴ ἅπαρ προσήνεχθη, ὥσπερ ἐκείνη ἢ εἰς τὰ Ἁγία τῶν ἁγίων --- Οὐκ ἄλλην Θυσίαν, καθάπερ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς τότε, ἀλλὰ τὴν αὐτὴν αἰεὶ ποιούμεν μᾶλλον δὲ ἀνάμνησιν ἐργαζόμεθα θυσίας⁹.

The significance of the sacramental offering is that it is a constant "memorial" of the "once for all" sacrifice of Christ.

What, for Chrysostom, was the meaning of that sacrifice? It is clear that he saw Christ's death as bringing about a cleansing from sin for those who would accept it. He is not entirely consistent, however, in his presentation of the motivation and "mechanics" of the atonement. In Homily XVI (on Heb. 9:15-18), he asserts the following: Οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἐνταῦθα μεσίτης ὁ Υἱὸς ἐγένετο τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ ἡμῶν. Οὐκ ἠθέλην ἡμῖν ἀφεῖναι ὁ Πατήρ τὴν κληρονομίαν ταύτην, ἀλλ' ὥργιστο πρὸς ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἐχάλεπαινε ὡς πρὸς ἀπηλλοτριωμένους - μεσίτης τοίνυν ἐγένετο ἡμῶν καὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐπεισεν αὐτόν.

10.

Passages such as this suggest that Christ's work is seen in terms of propiti-

ating on our behalf a God who is angry with us because of our sin. Yet in other places, Chrysostom seems to draw back from this conclusion, inclining rather to the Father's willingness to forgive. On 9:24 (Christ's entrance into heaven ἐμφανισθῆναι τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν), he comments, Τί ἐστίν, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν; Μετὰ Θουσίας ἀνῆλθε, φησὶ, δυνάμενῃς ἐξελείψασθαι τὸν Πατέρα. Διὰ τί, εἰπέ μοι; μὴ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ ἐχθρός; Οἱ ἄγγελοι ἐχθροὶ ᾤσαν, αὐτὸς οὐκ ἦν ἐχθρός· ὅτι γὰρ οἱ ἄγγελοι ἐχθροὶ ᾤσαν, ἀκουσον τί φησιν. Εἰρηνόποιήσε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, καὶ τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. 11.

This interesting reference to angelic rather than divine enmity against man is not further developed in his exposition of Hebrews but the fact of God's goodwill towards us is stressed again later in the same Homily:

Ἴδού ἀνῆνεγκε τὰ ἁμαρτήματα. ἤρην αὐτὰ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ ἀνῆνεγκε τῷ Πατρὶ, οὐκ ἵνα τι ὀρίσῃ κατ' αὐτῶν, ἀλλ' ἵνα αὐτὰ ἀφῇ. 12.

All in all, one is left in some doubt as to whether Chrysostom's God (and therefore the God he sees presented in Hebrews) is essentially for us or against us - a situation not helped by the homilist's concern to keep apart the two natures in the Person of Christ.

The value for humanity of Christ's suffering and triumph is seen by Chrysostom very much in exemplary terms. Jesus has identified with mankind in all but sin, opening up the way that people should follow. So, in Homily VII (on Heb. 4:11ff.): Ὁ δὲ λέγει, τοιοῦτον ἐστίν. Ἦλθε, φησὶν, ὁδὸν ἣν καὶ ἡμεῖς νῦν, μαλλον δὲ καὶ τραχυτέρα πάντων γὰρ ἔλαβε τῶν ἀνθρώπων πείραν --- Ἐπὶ γὰρ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀδύνατον εἶδέναι τὴν κάκωσιν τοῦ κακουμένου τὸν μὴ πείραν λαβόντα καὶ διὰ τῶν λίσσθητῶν ἐλθόντα. Πάντα ὑπέστη ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ὁ ἡμέτερος· διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο πρῶτον ὑπέστη, καὶ τότε ἀνέβη, ἵνα δύνῃται συμπάθειν --- καθ' ὁμοιότητα χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας. Ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἄλλο αἰνίττεται, ὅτι δυνατόν χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας, καὶ

ἐν θλίψεσιν ὄντα διενεγκεῖν

¹³. It is stressed,

however, that it is as *man* that Christ is able to identify and sympathize with us. On Heb. 2:18 ("For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted") Chrysostom comments: Πάνυ ταπεινὸν τοῦτο καὶ εὐτελὲς καὶ ἀνάξιον τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Christ ἔπαθε πολλὰ οἶδε συμπόσχειν. Καίτοι γε ἀπαθὴς ὁ Θεός ἐστιν· ἀλλὰ τὰ τῆς σαρκώσεως ἐνταῦθα διηγείται.

¹⁴. One has, perhaps, to investigate whether this rigid distinction between the two natures and what is appropriate to them does in fact correspond with what the author of Hebrews was trying to say.

The same consideration applies when one looks at the way Chrysostom sees the priesthood category relating to the Epistle as a whole. It seems clear that he regarded the priesthood of Christ as the central message which the author wanted to put across. However, Chrysostom does not appear to see any integral relationship between the priesthood argument and other matters raised by the author. These latter are seen rather as a concession to the dullness of the recipients, a concession that should not have been necessary. So, in Homily VIII we read, "Ὁρα γοῦν αὐτὸν συνεχῶς ὡδινόντα τὸν περὶ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως εἰσαγαγεῖν λόγον, καὶ αἰὲ ἀναβαλλόμενον." ¹⁵. The author, in deferring exposition of his main point, has to deal with material that is not essential to his basic message.

1.3 Cyril of Alexandria

In what has survived of Cyril of Alexandria's *Commentary*¹⁶, there is, as with Chrysostom, a marked concern to safeguard divine immutability and impassibility. Only Christ's human nature, therefore, could be involved with weakness and suffering. His priesthood, too, must necessarily be confined to his manhood. Such an approach is typified in Cyril's comment on Heb. 3:1:

Οὐκοῦν ἱερατεύει μὲν ἀνθρωπίνως ὅτι γέγονεν ἀνθρώπος, συνεδρεύει δὲ θεϊκῶς ὅτι μετέμεικε Λόγος¹⁷.

However, Cyril differs from Chrysostom and those of the 'Antiochene' school in his great concern to emphasize the unity of Christ's incarnate

person. So, on Heb. 1:8, he states of Christ: Τότε γὰρ ἐκονῶν ἡσέ τῇ κτίσει, ἐνώσας ἑαυτῷ τὸ κτιστὸν, καὶ χρίσας τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα τῇ Θεότητι, ὥστε ποιῆσαι τὰ ἀμφοτέρωθεν.¹⁸ It is Christ's divinity, though, that is the dominant and decisive factor. It is the power of his divinity that enables him successfully to recapitulate Adam's path¹⁹, and effectively to make expiation for the sins of mankind²⁰. Christ was without sin and could therefore make the perfect offering - a tenet which both Cyril and Chrysostom find clearly underlined in Hebrews. Yet, whereas Chrysostom would stress the real victory of Christ's humanity over sinful human nature, Cyril would maintain that it was in fact impossible for Christ to sin, being the unchangeable and divine Logos of God. It was such "guaranteed sinlessness" that guaranteed the effectiveness of mankind's salvation. So, on Heb. 7:27, we read: Θεοπρεπῶς οὖν ἄρα παθεῖν οὐκ ἀνέχεται τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, ὅτι μὴ φύσεως ἦν γεννητῆς οὐκ ἐχούσης οὐσιωδῶς τὸ ἀτρέπτον καὶ τὸ εἰσάπαν δύνασθαι διαδιδράσκειν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. υἱὸς οὖν ἄρα ἐστὶ παντέλειος, ἀνεπικεύρητον ἔχων παρ' ἑτέρου τὸ ἀκράδαντον εἰς ἁγιασμόν, φύσεως τε καρπὸν ἴδιον, τὸ ἀπλημμυλές.²¹

Thus it was the power of God in Christ, over-ruling the weakness of human nature, that made possible the deliverance and perfecting of fallen humanity. This emphasis helps to protect the unity of God and his saving activity, as well as the unity of Christ's incarnate Person. It makes much of divine omnipotence and impassibility. Yet does it, perhaps, fail to explore the significance of something clearly close to the heart of the message of Hebrews - the reality of Christ's suffering and temptation?

1.4 Martin Luther

It is interesting to note that Martin Luther's *Lectures on Hebrews* (March 1517 - March 1518)²² were delivered during a crucial phase in his life, a phase which included the publication of the Ninety-five Theses. By this stage,

Luther had known within himself some years of profound spiritual and theological struggle, the consequences of which have undoubtedly left their mark on what he has to say about Hebrews. For Luther, the text leads into a discussion of some of the things which were most exercising his mind and spirit at the time - the relationship between Law and Gospel, the significance of faith, the righteousness of God as contrasted with the righteousness of man²³. So also, when he speaks of Christ's priesthood and sacrificial offering for sin, we can discern something of Luther's own experience and his attitude towards the contemporary ecclesiastical situation. It is important to remember, however, that at this time Luther would still have regarded himself as a priest, i.e. a member of a distinct order of priesthood.

On the phrase "when he had made purification for sins" in 1:3, Luther writes, "With this brief word he makes absolutely useless all the righteousness and deeds of penitence of men. But he praises the exceedingly great mercy of God.... Therefore we should despair of our penitence, of our purification from sins; for before we repent our sins have already been forgiven. Indeed, first His very purification, on the contrary, also produces penitence in us, just as his righteousness produces our righteousness"²⁴. Surely there is reflected in such a comment Luther's own painful inner struggle regarding the nature of repentance and forgiveness.

The attention given in Hebrews to the subject of priesthood also moves Luther to express his opinions on the priests of his own day, often in very strong and polemical terms. Thus, on 5:1 he castigates those priests who indulge in violence and warfare, not sparing the Papacy: "Therefore these priests chosen rather from among demons are also appointed on behalf of demons against Christ and the Christians, Julius above all"²⁵. On a more positive note, he sees Christian priesthood as involving the imitation of Christ, the great High Priest. So on 2:17, "The apostle commends the two things in Christ that should shine forth in every priest according to the example of Christ, namely that he should be merciful to the people and faithful to God for the people. For through mercy he should empty himself and make all the evils of those who are under him his own, and should feel them in no other way than if he himself were in them. But through faithfulness he should share

with them all his own good things...."²⁶. And on 5:1, "Therefore all priests should imitate the Priest and know that they are not priests for themselves but for others....in order that they may bear the iniquities of others..."²⁷

Yet, although Christian priesthood should mean participation in the redemptive suffering of Christ, "the sacrifice of the New Testament is perfect and has ceased completely so far as the Head of the church, which is Christ, is concerned"²⁸. How Luther sees the connection between Christ's "once for all" sacrifice and the Christian's continuing participation therein is encapsulated in his interpretation of the Eucharist, included in his comment on 9:24. Christ's sacrifice is complete and unrepeatable, "but the spiritual sacrifice of his body, which is the church, is offered from day to day, when the church dies constantly with Christ and celebrates the mystical Pass-over...."²⁹ It is a matter of identification.

For Luther, such identification with Christ as Priest and Victim should release the believer from fear of God's terrible and inevitable judgement on sinful man - a fear which had indeed had torment for the young German monk. His comment on 4:12,13, however, shows that he had by no means abandoned his conviction of the reality and horror of divine judgement on the unbeliever: "...these words are understood as a threat of cruel punishment for unbelieversAnd thus the unbelievers will be tortured with endless, eternal and incurable cutting".³⁰ Approaching God through Christ, the great High Priest, was the safeguard against such torture. "For to those who have been terrified in consequence of the fear of that eternal judgement and that eternal cutting and division, no other refuge is left than that one sanctuary which is Christ, our Priest, in whose humanity alone we are protected and saved from a judgement of this kind.... Therefore the apostle also introduces Christ here more as a Priest than as a Lord and Judge, in order that He may console those who are frightened."³¹ Yet Christ the Priest is not merely the believer's safety from judgment - he is also the effective source of the Christian's sanctification. Christ is able "to sanctify us, to make us blameless, untainted, separated, and like Him in all respects. This happens when we cling to Him with faithful hearts..."³²

It is interesting to ponder what changes and developments might have taken place in Luther's comments had he produced another series of lectures on Hebrews a few years later, after the break with Rome (e.g., with regard to the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers). Certainly the lectures of 1517/1518 bear the marks of what, with hindsight, could be called a theology and spirituality in transition. As with many commentators, if perhaps to a more obvious degree, Luther's then current preoccupations have helped to determine what he saw in the text.

1.5 John Calvin

John Calvin's *Commentary*³³, too, was not uninfluenced by his own theological position. The way he saw priesthood, and in particular the priesthood of Christ, was closely connected with his understanding of God. It was the office of a priest "to appease the anger of God"³⁴. That anger was the necessary response of the all-holy God to the sin of mankind. If man were to be saved, he needed a suitable mediator to "mollify God's wrath"³⁵ against him, and if that salvation were to be finally effective, the mediator must be both human and sinless. Such was Christ, Son of God and Son of man. He, then, was the perfect Mediator and "the salvation of all of us is effected by and turns on the priesthood of Christ"³⁶. He alone was fitted "to reconcile God to us"³⁷ - a turn of phrase which says much concerning Calvin's concept of God.

This priestly work of mediation inevitably involved sacrifice, for "the priest is only a peacemaker between God and man when a victim is sacrificed, because without sacrifice there is no remission of sins and the wrath of God is not appeased"³⁸. Our great High Priest, therefore, offered his own unblemished self, so making possible the restoration of fellowship between God and man. "The fruits of Christ's death" will be enjoyed by those who believe³⁹.

It followed for Calvin that the perfect work of Christ the Priest had done away with the need for a continuing mediatorial and sacrificial priesthood. The way was now open for all to boldly^{to} approach the throne of grace for themselves, confident, in Christ, of God's mercy⁴⁰. It was at points

such as this in his commentary that Calvin found it difficult to stay in the realms of abstract theology. He could not resist moving into some "applied" critical polemic against the Roman Church of his day, as he saw it. "It is an easy step to deduce from this that the light of the gospel has been put out in the papacy....They admit in theory that Christ is the Mediator, but in actual fact they destroy the power of His priesthood and deprive Him of His honour....the power is taken away from the priesthood of Christ as long as men hesitate and look anxiously for other mediators..."⁴¹ In similar vein, when commenting on Heb. 5:1, Calvin declares, "we must expose the ignorance of those who apply these principles to our time as if the necessity for priests to offer sacrifices were the same today... Those who want to found the sacrifice of the mass on this passage are more than ridiculous"⁴².

Though Calvin contended strongly that the need for a special mediatorial order of priesthood had been abrogated, he nevertheless attached much importance to the concept of the priesthood of all believers. This kind of priesthood he seems to have seen predominantly in terms of unrestricted access to God. Thus, commenting on Heb. 10:19-23, he declares, "The way into heaven is open for us not only in symbol but in very truth by the mercy of Christ because he has made us a royal priesthood"⁴³.

Calvin clearly underlined the importance given in Hebrews to the notion of Christ's priesthood. Even laying aside the polemical element, however, it needs to be asked whether his exegesis has illuminated or clouded the Epistle's message concerning God's character and activity in relation to humanity.

1.6 David Dickson

The seventeenth century Scottish Puritan commentator, David Dickson⁴⁴, was convinced that the major aspect of Christ's priestly work, as set out in Hebrews, was to appease the wrath of God against man. He also saw Christ's priesthood as a function appropriate only to his humanity. So, on 2:17, he comments, "As Christ took on our nature, so in our nature, he took on a special office of priesthood to do us good.... In special, as our sins daily deserve and

provoke God's anger, so doth Christ's priesthood pacify God's wrath, and work reconciliation to us"⁴⁵. Only Christ, our Mediator, can make "our persons and service acceptable to God: and therefore in nothing may we pass by him"⁴⁶. We can come without fear to Christ because, being human, he understands our human weakness. "First, the people's comfort did require that the high priest should be a man, So is Christ a man, chosen out from amongst men. The flower of all the flock. Therefore we may come the more homely to him."⁴⁷ Christ is indeed a most sympathetic figure who "blesseth us with all blessing solidly"⁴⁸, but one wonders where exactly, in Dickson's exegesis, this leaves God. Is there, in fact, a dichotomy in the Godhead? This would seem to be an almost inevitable consequence of Dickson's reading of the text - and, of course, he is not alone in reading the text in the way he does. But would the author of Hebrews have endorsed his reading?

We should add that, for Dickson, the priesthood of Christ is unique and exclusive: "...as Melchizedek had neither any joined with him in his priesthood, nor deputy, nor vicar under him in it, nor successor to his office; so neither hath Christ any joined with him, or substitute or successor to him in his priesthood"⁴⁹. It is not difficult to discern here an element of special pleading.

1.7 F. Delitzsch

Delitzsch's commentary⁵⁰ produced in the mid-nineteenth century, for all its weight of learning, had nonetheless an expressly polemical and confessional motivation. Delitzsch states in his Preface that he has chosen to write a commentary on Hebrews in order to make a decisive contribution to the controversy then raging over the doctrine of the atonement - a controversy initiated by the second part of Dr. J. von Hofmann's work 'Der Schriftheweis'⁵¹. "Many witnesses have already risen up against his teaching", declares Delitzsch, "as opposed not only to our peculiar Lutheran Confession, but also to the faith and conscientious convictions of the whole Christian Church. To be silent and inactive for my part in the midst of such a controversy, wherein the very heart and centre of Christianity itself was touched, neither my outward circumstances nor my internal sense of right permitted me"⁵². He con-

cludes by saying, "...it is my conviction now, as it was formerly, that my dear friend and colleague [von Hofmann]'s views...are not less opposed to the clear sense of the apostolic word, when impartially interpreted, than to the faith and teaching of the church....Would that my labours might... contribute in any way to rendering the present conflict a benefit to the church by a final victory gained for truth..."⁵³

The "truth" which Delitzsch sets out to champion is the doctrine of penal substitution, the vicarious satisfaction by Christ of God's wrath against sinful man. This predetermined position, despite the commentator's claim to be impartial, inevitably colours his exegesis, and particularly so with regard to passages that treat of Christ's priesthood. On 2:17, for example, he takes the opportunity to argue at some length, usually with Hofmann as his target, in favour of the penal interpretation. Christ's priestly work was to take upon himself in his sacrificial death "the divine wrath as merited by sin... its cloud and tempest gathering and breaking on His innocent head"⁵⁴. By submitting himself to this "storm of wrath" he not only reconciled man to God but also God to man⁵⁵ (though Delitzsch acknowledges that neither in Hebrews nor anywhere else in scripture is this latter explicitly stated). Further, Christ's sacrifice, according to Delitzsch, effected a reconciliation within the Godhead itself. "And so the work of atonement, when regarded in its totality, and beginning, middle and end are taken together, is but the self-reconciling of the Godhead within itself... Our author...from [2] ver. 11 onwards, considers the work of atonement under no other point of view than this: an arrangement of the Godhead within and at unity with itself for our salvation. All the sufferings inflicted by the will of the Father on the Son are means of making the Saviour of mankind, as such, perfect... all [Christ's] reconciling work henceforth is directed to one end, the preventing of that sin which still clings to His people from disturbing the relations of love once for all established."⁵⁶ On this view, God's wrath had to be satisfied before God's love could become operative - and Christ, our great High Priest, continues, as it were, to deflect the wrath so that the love may be transmitted. How far this is a valid exegesis of 2:11-18 is open to question. We shall consider its merits in our exploration of the text of chapter 2⁵⁷.

Priesthood itself Delitzsch sees, predictably, in terms of sacrificial mediation, "cleansing of sins", "sanctifying". Christ's High-Priesthood on earth is perfected by his death. That death marks the fulfilment of the type of the Aaronic order. His appearance in the heavenly sanctuary, however, signifies his exaltation and appointment as a "priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek"⁵⁸. Delitzsch argues that the writer of Hebrews regards this order as the ideal, "uniting the offices both of David and of Aaron" and, as fulfilled in Christ, doing away with the need for either in earthly terms. "After the same manner in which Melchizedek was at once priest and king, is Christ eternally and antitypically possessor of both these dignities."⁵⁹

Why our author decided to present Christ as a priest is not really discussed. It seems to be Delitzsch's contention that because of "the nature of His work" as conceived in Hebrews, the priesthood category of interpretation was inevitable⁶⁰, particularly when reinforced by the author's reading of the Old Testament and evident interest in the Jewish cult. Certainly for Delitzsch, the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ constitute the dominant theme of the Epistle, though seen very definitely in terms of a particular view of the atonement⁶¹. Christ as Priest and Victim is the supreme Mediator, the perfect Propitiator.

It is, perhaps, important to ask how far the concept of God underlying Delitzsch's doctrinal position and that permeating the argument of Hebrews do, in fact, coincide.

1.8 B.F. Westcott

Westcott, in his Commentary of 1889⁶², describes Christ's High-Priesthood as "the ruling thought of the Epistle"⁶³. His analysis of that "ruling thought" takes in much from his own understanding of priesthood. In general terms he would define the latter as "the provision for a fellowship between God and man, for bringing God to man and man to God"⁶⁴. This task Christ fulfils perfectly, being Son of man and Son of God.

Westcott goes on from this traditional position to divide priesthood into two main categories, which he calls "natural" and "theocratic"⁶⁵. "Natural" priesthood, he believes, "belongs to the constitution of man". It is a universally recognised concept. The "natural" priest, whether marked out by "superior station" (e.g. head of family or head of race) or "superior knowledge" (e.g. medicine-man or sorcerer) "seeks to establish a harmony between those whom he represents and the unseen". "Theocratic" priesthood is rather more specialist in character, speaking of a divinely ordained relationship between God and a particular people - Israel being the obvious example. Here, rules and guidelines are laid down by God himself and priestly work is summed up in the High Priest, who represents the whole people.

Westcott maintains that both these types of priesthood are to be found in Hebrews, brought to perfection by the person and work of Christ. Through "the whole discipline of earthly life", through the offering of himself and through his "entrance into the presence of God", Christ "fulfilled the type of the Aaronic High-Priesthood"⁶⁶. After his session at the right hand of God, Christ also fulfilled the royal High-Priesthood of Melchizedek, seen as the type of "an universal priesthood". Therefore Christ's significance is for the whole world and not just for a particular people⁶⁷.

The heavenly work of this High Priest "after the order of Melchizedek" is summed up thus: "As High-priest He represents man to God: as King He represents God to man"⁶⁸. The High-Priestly part Westcott describes as having three main aspects: intercession; the taking up and offering to God of believers' prayers, praises and spiritual desires; the guaranteeing of access to God, through Christ, of all who believe. The commentator, interestingly, adds his own note of warning: "This work is shewn to us in the Epistle... and we have no authority to go beyond its teaching... The modern conception of Christ pleading in heaven His Passion, 'offering His blood', on behalf of men has no foundation in the Epistle... His glorified humanity is the eternal pledge of the absolute efficacy of His accomplished work..."⁶⁹ Thus, Westcott, too, falls victim to the tempting trap of 'special pleading'.

In Westcott's commentary, there is little discussion concerning the origins of Hebrews' priestly interpretation of Christ, though Philo is clearly thought to be of some importance. Neither is there much consideration of how the priestly category relates to the rest of the NT writings. The place of the priesthood theme within the literary and theological structure of the Epistle itself was not, Westcott suggests, carefully thought out by the author. It involved rather "the unfolding of a special idea... without any trace of conscious design on the part of the author"⁷⁰

After studying Westcott's analysis, it must be said that we are left with a number of questions - not least, whence came this 'special idea'? Can it, in fact, be seen in the "natural" and "theocratic" terms regarded as so significant by the commentator? And does the author really give so little conscious thought to the unfolding of his idea?

1.9 James Moffatt

Moffatt, in his Commentary of 1924⁷¹, argues that the author of Hebrews had no intention of presenting Melchizedek as the paradigm of a "natural" priesthood, superior in quality to the Levitical order and finding its fulfilment in Christ. According to Moffatt, the writer's primary aim was "to discredit the levitical priesthood of bygone days". He chose the Melchizedek figure as a major weapon because scripture showed he was prior in time to Levi and because "the Melchizedek priesthood... already played an important rôle in Jewish speculation in connexion with the messianic hope". This rôle Moffatt sees in terms of Philo's identification of Melchizedek with the Logos and the theological effects of the Maccabean priest-kings, reflected particularly in the 'Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs'⁷². We are also pointed to the notion that the priesthood of Melchizedek rested "on personality not on heredity", thus typifying "that eternal priesthood of the Christ which was to supersede the levitical, for all the ancient prestige of the latter"⁷³. Here Moffatt is following E.F. Scott, who maintains that the idea Hebrews is trying to express is that "the priesthood which can bring us nearer God must be one of inherent character and personality", an idea which, Scott says, "underlies all our modern thought - social and political as well as religious". Moffatt adds his

seal of approval to this by asserting that "true authority is not prescriptive but personal"⁷⁴. We may perhaps wonder whether such an assessment of our writer's manner of thinking is entirely free from the presuppositions of a later age and culture.

Moffatt sees the priesthood of Christ in essentially mediatorial and sacrificial terms. Thus he identifies the heart of Hebrews' Christology as "the sacrifice and priestly service of Christ as the mediator of [the] new covenant with its eternal fellowship"⁷⁵. Moffatt lays great stress on the exclusive character of Jesus as mediator. So he writes: "Over and again [our author] comes to a point where contemporary opinions (with which he was quite familiar) suggested e.g. the intercession of angels in heaven, or of departed saints on behalf of men on earth, ideas like the merits of the fathers or the atoning efficacy of martyrdom in the past, to facilitate the approach of sinful men to God. These he deliberately ignores. In view of the single, sufficient sacrifice of Jesus in the light of his eternally valid intercession, no supplementary aid was required. It is not accidental that such beliefs are left out of our author's scheme of thought. It is a fresh proof of his genuinely primitive faith in Jesus as the one mediator"⁷⁶.

Such a passage makes a number of assumptions, not least with regard to the nature of the "contemporary opinions" referred to, the writer's familiarity with them, and his deliberate ignoring of them. It also smacks of special pleading. Perhaps, as we have seen with other commentators, Moffatt's own doctrinal position was not without its influence.

He goes on to underline the important place given in the Epistle to the remission of sins, summing up his view of the author's thinking on the subject by saying: "There can be no access without an amnesty for the past; the religious communion of the immediate future must be guaranteed by a sacrifice ratifying the pardon of God"⁷⁷. This "amnesty" and "ratification" found their expression in Christ's willing sacrifice of himself, "the personal, free self-sacrifice of Christ in the body" - a self-sacrifice Moffatt sees as eternal and "not confined to the historical act on Calvary", citing 7:25 and 9:24⁷⁸. It was inextricably bound up with the shedding of blood. This fact, Moffatt asserts,

is simply accepted as axiomatic by the author, who makes no attempt to explain why it should be so. However, Moffatt himself proceeds to explain that "the idea of *πρὸς Ἐβραίους* [consists in] the idea that because Jesus was what he was, his death has such an atoning significance as to inaugurate a new and final relationship between God and men, the idea that his blood purifies the conscience because it is *his* blood, the blood of the sinless Christ, who is both the priest and the sacrifice"⁷⁹. We are back to Moffatt's conviction of the importance of the personality of the priest.

He is convinced, too, of the over-arching influence of Philo on the thinking and manner of expression of the author of Hebrews. This, he believes, gave the writer a particular problem regarding the atonement: "The author breathed the Philonic atmosphere on which the eternal Now over-shadowed the things of space and time, but he knew this sacrifice had taken place on the cross, and his problem was one which never confronted Philo, the problem which we moderns have to face in the question: How can a single historical fact possess a timeless significance?"⁸⁰ The extent of our author's dependence on Philo can, of course, be questioned, as can the reality of his struggle to marry idealism and historical event, but for Moffatt, both are of considerable importance⁸¹.

As to possible sources of Hebrews' representation of Christ as High Priest, Moffatt believes that the idea may well have been "a flash of inspiration, one of the notes of originality and insight which mark the writer's treatment and restatement of the faith"⁸². Acknowledging that even "the most brilliant flashes depend on an atmosphere already prepared for them", Moffatt then seeks to identify the elements which created this favourable atmosphere. Philo's speculations about the Logos as high priest are regarded as significant but insufficient in themselves. "The current conception of a heavenly sanctuary" is seen as a further element, supported by reference to Philo, "apocalyptic piety of the second century BC", the 'Testament of Levi', and the book of Revelation. Our author's reading of the Pentateuch is dismissed as secondary and confirmatory for, in Moffatt's eyes, Psalm 110, with its combination of messianic and sacerdotal functions, provides the real sparking point. He adds that such a combination of rôles is also associated

with the priest-kings of the Hasmonean era and suggests that, "Probably the passing phase of expectation, that a messiah would arise from the sacerdotal Maccabeans, accounts for such a fusion of messiah and priest". Although he feels its influence was not wide, he nevertheless believes that it may have been "not unimportant for the author of Hebrews"⁸³. He also sees "a partial anticipation" of the notion of Christ's priesthood in the Enochic conception of the Son of Man. However, he urges caution on this one, stressing that our author avoids the title "Son of Man" and arguing that the writer's emphasis on Christ's human sympathy and transcendence derive "from his meditation on the real Jesus ultimately, not from any apocalyptic speculations"⁸⁴.

Whilst maintaining that, for Hebrews, the central theme is the priesthood of Christ, Moffatt also suggests that this theme is not thought out quite as clearly as it might have been, is in any case too limited to carry all that the author wants to say, and sits rather uneasily alongside other more 'traditional' ways of understanding Christ.

He argues, for example, that the questions, "When did Christ become a priest?" and "How is the divine Sonship compatible with the earthly life?" are questions which arise in the reader's mind but which the author does not answer. "There is a large section in his thought upon Christ as the eternal, transcendental Son which remains obscure to us and which perhaps was indefinite to himself"⁸⁵. Further, Moffatt asserts, "the category of the High-priesthood itself was not large enough for the writer's full message"⁸⁶. According to Moffatt, it could not contain either his eschatology or his ethical teaching. The other Christological categories and ideas which are to be found in Hebrews Moffatt sees as evidence of the Epistle's "primitive character", but he discerns no fundamental bonding between them and the concept of priesthood. Thus he points to the description of Christ as Heir and Lord and notes "the isolated reference to the overthrow of the devil" as "another allusion to ideas which were in the background of the writer's mind"⁸⁷. Perhaps surprisingly in view of Moffatt's stress on the importance of Psalm 110, he regards the author's combination of the sacerdotal and royal metaphors as "incongruous". "Primarily", he says, "it is a survival of the

older militant messianic category which is relevant in the first chapter, but out of place in the argument from the priesthood..."⁸⁸

It would seem that, for Moffatt, the central theme of priesthood as set out in chapters 7 to 10 has but a tenuous connection with much of what precedes and follows it.

1.10 C. Spicq

Spicq, in his monumental Commentary of 1952/53⁸⁹, also sees chapters 7 to 10 as containing the heart of the author's argument, though he insists that that heart is carefully set within a body which is, structurally and theologically, very closely related to it. His view of Christ's priesthood as the main theme and its relationship with the rest of the Epistle may be summarized in the following comment: "...l'essentiel de son enseignement doctrinal est le Christ-Prêtre. Ce sujet n'est traité ex professo que dans les chaputres VII - X. On est donc en droit de considérer I - VI à la fois comme une préparation pédagogique et morale (cf. V, 11) et une introduction au sens technique d'acheminement et de préliminaire. En musique, une symphonie composée d'un petit nombre de phrases tient lieu d'ouverture à un opéra et annonce le dessein de la composition... Ainsi Hébr. donne accès à la thèse de l'excellence du sacerdoce du Christ en présentant la personne et la mission du Pontife, et en définissant le qualité du prêtre"⁹⁰.

What follows after the exposition of the main theme in chapters 7 to 10, Spicq sees as detailed practical application of what has already been said.

Like so many other commentators, Spicq interprets priesthood very much in terms of mediation and therefore analyses the priesthood of Jesus in this light. "Prêtre, selon la nature humaine, mais en tant que celle-ci est celle du Fils, Jésus est le médiateur parfait, authentique, représentant de l'humanité, sûrement agréé de Dieu. Il fait le pont - Pontifex - entre la terre et le ciel. C'est la sacerdoce parfait, idéal."⁹¹ Christ is the perfect priest because he is perfect Son of God and perfect man. He can therefore act as the perfect bridge between God and man.

For Spicq, Hebrews points clearly to the eternal and heavenly character of Christ's priesthood, significant though his priestly ministry on earth might be. "Si le Christ est prêtre dès sa naissance, l'exercice de son sacerdoce n'est pas limité à la terre. Le sacerdoce Melchisédech, éternel, doit normalement s'exercer dans le sanctuaire céleste."⁹² Christ is exalted to the right hand of God so that he may consummate his eternal priesthood by bringing to it all the experience of his manhood and by ever living to make intercession for us. The heavenly Priest is "un travailleur, un λειτουργός ou ministre du culte qui officie en permanence"⁹³. In seeking to pinpoint the relationship which our author saw between the earthly and heavenly aspects of Christ's priesthood, Spicq offers the following analysis: "Il semble que Hébre. insiste davantage sur le rôle de victime que Jésus a joué durant sa vie terrestre, et sur son activité de Pontife une fois franchi l'accès au ciel. Le lien entre ces deux activités et ces deux mondes peut se concevoir de la façon suivante. D'une part, le grand Prêtre a lui-même versé son propre sang ici-bas..., et c'est l'aspersion du sang qui seule lui permet de pénétrer dans le Saint des Saints...; d'autre part, Jésus possède une vie impérissable et son sacerdoce est éternel. L'exercice de son ministère sur terre ne pouvait être que transitoire, et après sa mort, il pénètre de plein droit et comme de plein pied dans le sanctuaire du ciel qu'il doit desservir. Cette inauguration de la nouvelle liturgie ne pouvait se faire sans un rite approprié. Il y eut précisément comme une dédicace du sanctuaire... et, sinon un nouveau sacre, du moins une nouvelle investiture du grand Prêtre".⁹⁴

The sacrifice of the great High Priest as set out in Hebrews, Spicq sees as a representative offering - designed by God to bring about expiation of sins rather than a propitiation of divine wrath. The effectiveness of this sacrifice is due not so much to the deed as to the character and motivation of the doer. "La volonté d'oblation de la victime et la sainteté du Prêtre qui la présente à Dieu...C'est cette consécration à Dieu, corps et âme, qui donne à l'offrande de Jésus son efficacité hors pair, et lui permettre par conséquent de continuer au ciel son activité sacerdotale."⁹⁵

Whilst acknowledging it to be strange that in a writing so concerned with priesthood and sacrifice there is no explicit mention of the Eucharist, Spicq

nonetheless believes that it contains frequent allusions to this sacrament²⁶. He points, for example, to the phrase γενοαμένους τε τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς ἑπουρανίου in 6:4 and the use of the word ἀνάμνησις in 10:3. He holds that when our author talks of our being sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ (10:10), "il est difficile de ne pas songer à l'institution de la Cène". Similarly, 13:10ff. speaks of the Eucharistic activity of the community to which the Epistle is addressed, as does the exhortation (in 10:45) not to neglect assembling together (particularly seen in the context of the offering of the High Priest in vv. 19-21 and the mention of looking for "the Day" in v. 25)²⁷. Spicq sums up his argument in a way which clearly reflects his own ecclesiastical tradition:

"En conclusion, la liturgie céleste, qui n'est que l'offrande du Calvaire hors des limites de l'espace et du temps, peut fort bien être représentée et célébrée, symbolisée et commémorée par chaque génération chrétienne. Le sacrifice de la Messe n'est pas autre chose. Ce ne sont, certes, que des inférences, mais il importait de marquer la place où se situe dans Hébr. le sacrifice de l'église. Il se relie au sacrifice céleste et éternel plus directement qu'à l'immolation du Calvaire. Le même prêtre et le même victime, qui versent le sang de l'aspersion dans la cité du Dieu vivant (XII, 24), continuent leur méditation avec la participation et l'offrande de tous les croyants qui font déjà partie de cette cité (XII, 22)"²⁸.

Comparing this with Protestant commentators like Calvin, we again note with interest how the text (plus, perhaps religious presuppositions) can inspire directly opposing interpretations.

Although accepting that, among NT writings, Hebrews develops the concept of Christ's priesthood to a unique degree, Spicq would not allow that the idea came from an isolated spark of inspiration. His main contention is that the author was heavily influenced by the Johannine catechesis, itself a part of that 'Asia Minor Christianity' which is also associated with 1 Peter, Revelation, and the letters of Ignatius and Polycarp - all of which give some attention to the notion of priesthood²⁹. Our author came out of this atmosphere, affected particularly by the 'Johannine' way of looking at Christ.

"Le sacerdoce du Christ sanctifiant les siens (Heb. 10:10), consacré par le Père pour être apte à sa mission (Jn. 10:36) et faisant l'offrande volontaire de sa vie (Heb. 10:5-7); Jn. 14:31), est déjà insinué par Jn."¹⁰⁰ Our author, seeing great theological promise in such a priestly concept, developed its possibilities, encouraged also by his reading of Philo and the Old Testament (particularly Psalm 110, which Spicq regards as "le bien fondé de son argumentation théologique")¹⁰¹. In addition, Spicq sees a certain inevitability about Hebrews' use of the priesthood category to interpret the person and work of Christ. Because Christ "s'agissait de sanctifier et de conduire à Dieu une humanité pécheresse, un tel office ne pouvait être rempli que par un prêtre. Voilà pourquoi le sacerdoce est la qualité privilégiée du Christ selon l'épître aux Hébreux"¹⁰². We perhaps have further to ask why, if this situation was so obvious to the author of Hebrews, it was patently not so to the other NT writers. Even if we can discern germs of the idea in other canonical writings, they remain little more than that.

Spicq's view concerning the recipients of the Epistle brings another factor into play. The author was further encouraged to think and write on the subject of priesthood because the community he was addressing was made up of a group of converted priests - men who were disheartened, confused, and in danger of being drawn back into their Jewish past¹⁰³.

For Spicq, then, our author's use of the priesthood category was due not only to his own theological reflection but also to the kind of Christianity in which he had been nurtured (i.e. the 'Asia Minor variety' which produced John et al), coupled with the nature and '*Sitz im Leben*' of the people to whom he was writing.

In conclusion, we might note that Spicq gives but scant attention to the way in which the idea of Christ's priesthood could be related to other Christological categories which are apparent in the Epistle (Kingly Messiah, Son of Man, etc). His main emphasis and concern is that the concept of Christ as Priest has the pre-eminence.

1.11 G.W. Buchanan

Buchanan's provocative Commentary, in the Anchor Bible series, (1972)¹⁰⁴ pursues a new and controversial line. Buchanan believes that the Epistle is a homily written by one of its leaders for a Jewish Christian monastic community in Jerusalem. Members of this community had given up their homes and possessions (cf. 10:34) and migrated to "Mount Zion... the city of the living God", where they had hoped to experience the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham (i.e. possession by his descendants of the promised land), for which the way had been opened by the death of Jesus. When discouragement set in, due to God's apparent delay, the writer of Hebrews set to work. His main aim was to show how the promises made to Abraham could be obtained, and this he sought to do "in a typically midrashic manner"¹⁰⁵. Not for Buchanan the influence of Philo and Hellenistic Judaism in general. For him, the rabbinic model of scriptural interpretation was of paramount importance in Hebrews¹⁰⁶.

Although he contends that in midrashic fashion, "the author has woven and interwoven his major emphases so that they cannot be completely separated from one another"¹⁰⁷, Buchanan would still argue that the priesthood of Christ and its consequences constitute "the main thesis of the document"¹⁰⁸. The essential link between the author's aim and his main theme can be summarized as follows:-

Jesus was important to the author of Hebrews... for the offering he made which renewed the possibility of receiving the promise... As a high priest, Jesus successfully atoned for his own sins and those of the people... It was the death of Jesus that was important to the author. Interpreted as an atonement offering, his death could justify the claim that he was a true martyr, whose sins had been cleansed, leaving him sinless, holy, undefiled, perfect and sanctified¹⁰⁹.

The way is open to take possession of the promised land (seen in a definitely earthly rather than heavenly or spiritual sense) because Jesus has atoned for Israel's sin by his willingly embraced martyr's death. The mechanics of this Buchanan sees in terms of the notion of "the treasury of

merits". The self-offering of Jesus had built up so many "credits" that God's favour was assured towards those who believed. So, "believers... should approach the throne of grace with boldness. It was only in this way that they might receive the benefits tabulated to the credit of Israel in the treasury of merits by the sacrifice of Jesus"¹⁰. This sacrifice is likened to the martyrdom of "the faithful who resisted the Greeks in the Maccabean Revolt", though why Jesus' death should be so much more decisively efficacious than theirs is not clearly explained.

A striking feature of Buchanan's interpretation is his contention that the author of Hebrews did not regard Jesus as sinless before his death. Rather, Jesus' own sin was cleansed, along with that of the rest of Israel, by his voluntary and priestly sacrifice of himself. Buchanan finds support for his view in the writer's stress on Jesus' being "made perfect through suffering" and in verses like 1:3 and 7:27, which, the commentator argues, imply that Jesus was making purification for his own sins as well as for those of the people. However we may assess this exegesis, it is arguable whether Buchanan relates his proposition adequately to verses such as 4:15 (where Jesus is described as *πεπρωμένον δὲ κατὰ πάντα καθ'ὁμολόγητα χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*) and 9:14 (where Jesus is said to have offered himself *ἁμωμον τῷ Θεῷ*). 4:15, he simply asserts, "does not necessarily mean that [Jesus] had never committed a moral offence in his life"¹¹, and on 9:14 he makes no attempt to explain how Jesus could have offered himself as an unblemished sacrifice if he were at this stage tainted with his own sin. Indeed, one of the general methodological weaknesses of Buchanan's commentary is that he tends to avoid careful consideration of exegeses not his own and, in some instances, omits to comment at all on significant words or phrases in the text¹². Further, his heavy dependence on rabbinic writings to back up his interpretation inevitably means that for much of the time he has to follow the dubious procedure of relying on material later than the first century A.D.

In one important area, however, Buchanan looks backwards rather than forward in time - and that is with respect to the source of Hebrews' concept of Jesus as High Priest. "The author wanted to interpret Jesus' rôle in terms

of a priesthood and his death as a priestly sacrifice. Therefore he had to support his position rather defensively on the basis of scripture. He used two enthronement psalms, one which called its hero "messiah" and "son", and the other that called him a priest. On the basis of these, he could offer an interpretation that was not traditional for Jesus, but one that was patterned somewhat according to the leadership of the Hasmoneans who assumed both priestly and royal functions."¹³

For Buchanan, the influence of the Hasmonean era on the writer of Hebrews was of no small significance. "There are many... indications that the author of Hebrews was influenced by the literature and theological beliefs related to the Maccabean period and that the Hasmonean priestly rulers influenced his Christology."¹⁴ We sense somehow that Buchanan regrets this, along, perhaps, with the priesthood category itself. "Since the author wanted to present Jesus as a priest and a king, he had to justify his claim by some forced logic, similar to that used by the Hasmoneans to justify their position."¹⁵ "Forced logic" and the "defensive scriptural support" of our earlier quotation are strange expressions to use by one who is convinced of Hebrews' debt to the rabbinic method of interpreting scripture. Either they indicate Buchanan's own assessment of the value of that rabbinic method or they betray his essential uneasiness with what our author was trying to say.

1.12 P.E. Hughes

For Hughes¹⁶, the main theme of the Epistle is the supremacy of Christ. Christ is superior to the prophets, to the angels, to Moses and to Aaron. Thus the notion of Christ's priesthood, important though it is, is but *primus inter pares*. It is the major, but not the only, category employed to stress the absolute supremacy of Christ (seen in a Jewish context) and therefore the need for wholehearted and exclusive commitment¹⁷. Hughes takes as his "working hypothesis" the theory that the Epistle was addressed to Jewish converts who had "in one way or another encountered and felt the attraction of the teachings... of Essenism", which he takes to be illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls¹⁸. "A situation in which members of a Christian group were finding such beliefs attractive would fully explain the necessity for sending a letter

insisting on the absolute and unique supremacy of Christ, and therefore his superiority to all others, with particular reference to prophets and angels, Moses and Aaron."¹¹⁹ The basic stimulus, then, for Hebrews' presentation of Christ as the great and eternal Priest "after the order of Melchizedek" was the "pull" on the community with which he was concerned of their sectarian Jewish background - a background which placed much stress on the expectation of a messianic priest. Hughes points further to the discovery of fragments at Qumran which "provide evidence that Melchizedek, so significant a figure in the eyes of the author, was assigned a prominent rôle in the eschatological perspective of the Dead Sea Sect. Thus another link is forged, and we can now better understand the necessity for the careful instruction that is given these Hebrew Christians regarding the proper place and relevance of Melchizedek"¹²⁰.

If the situation of his readers provided the basic stimulus, the author, according to Hughes, was also drawn to the priesthood category by his reflection on the meaning of the atonement effected by Christ. On 2:17 Hughes comments, "It was precisely this 'likeness' to his brethren that qualified him (hence our author's insistence on its necessity) to act as their 'high priest' - a title and function,... though not applied to Christ elsewhere in the New Testament, thoroughly consonant with the apostolic doctrine of the atoning sacrifice he offered at Calvary. The Son could not have represented men before God, offering, as their High Priest, the sacrifice of himself on their behalf and in their place, had he not first become their fellow-man"¹²¹. It is clear that the commentator sees "the apostolic doctrine of the atoning sacrifice" in terms of vicarious satisfaction. Christ in his sacrificial death has borne the penalty due to sinful man. Believing that Hebrews presents Jesus as divine as well as human, Hughes, like Delitzsch, seeks to explain how this interpretation of the atonement is consistent with the unity of the God-head. Thus he argues, "To procure our restoration, God himself has met the demands of his own holiness. He has, so to speak, propitiated himself in our place, thereby achieving the reconciliation to himself of mankind, who otherwise were hopelessly alienated and under condemnation because of sin". In the death of Jesus "we see that love and justice meet and are satisfied"¹²².

Christ's continuing priesthood in heaven, maintains Hughes, is the guarantee of the free access of believers into "the presence-chamber of God"¹²³. "How can we who draw near to God through Christ fail to be eternally secure in view of the fact not only that "he always lives" but also that as our ever living priest he never ceases "to make intercession" for us in the heavenly sanctuary?"¹²⁴ The fact that Christ is intercessor means that there can be no other in heaven, whether angels or saints. "To rely upon angels or saints or any other finite being for their intercessions is not only futile; it also betrays a failure of confidence in the adequacy of Christ as our intercessor..."¹²⁵ Apart from going beyond at least the explicit argument of Hebrews, such an assertion raises important questions concerning the value of intercessory prayer generally.

According to Hughes, Christ's eternal priesthood is also exclusive. He draws the following conclusion:- "...our epistle teaches with the clearest possible emphasis that the introduction of the order of Melchizedek means the disappearance of the order of Levi; consequently any suggestion that the latter is still in force in the ministry of men is inadmissible and shows a surprising disregard of the instruction so plainly given by our author... What is remarkable is that, notwithstanding the plain doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews, by the middle of the third century the Christian ministry has come to be widely understood in terms of the levitical priesthood of the old covenant"¹²⁶. Yet again, we perceive the influence on the commentator of a pre-existing doctrinal position.

We may note, finally, that Hughes sees a close relationship in Hebrews between the categories of sonship and priesthood. On 5:4-6 he comments, "The collocation of these two messianic affirmations (Ps.2:7; Ps. 110:4) ... shows how closely within the perspective of the history of redemption the Sonship and the Priesthood of Christ belong together, corresponding to the combination of deity and humanity in the theanthropic person of the Mediator..."¹²⁷ We might perhaps ask whether the author of Hebrews in fact confines the concept of sonship to the divinity of Christ.. Could it not also have a more earthly and human significance?

Chapter 2

Whence priesthood? A survey of possible sources

1. Jewish and non-Christian ideas and traditions

2.1 Introductory

The concept of Christ's priesthood was undoubtedly an important ingredient of that "solid food" which the author of Hebrews sought so earnestly to commend to his readers. How he came upon it is much more questionable. Our brief and selective survey of commentaries has already indicated that the possibilities are many and various. It remains to examine rather more closely the possible sources of his inspiration before going on to explore the significance of the use of the priestly category in the Epistle's overall argument.

2.2 Psalm 110

It is clear from the abundance of quotation and allusion that the writer was in close touch with the literature of the OT. Could it have been his thinking on these scriptures that first suggested to him the idea of Christ as our great High Priest? Certainly he would not be alone in finding in the OT anticipatory prophecies regarding the person and work of Jesus. Such a conviction runs through the whole spectrum of traditions reflected in the NT. All the promises of God had found their 'yes' in him'. It is possible, then, that the author of Hebrews, meditating on the Jewish scriptures, saw in them a setting forth of Christ, not only in terms of 'Lord' already familiar to Christians, but also as priest. If we ask which passages could have given him this notion, then Psalm 110:4 must be a leading contender. According to the Synoptists², the first verse of this psalm was quoted by Jesus himself, with reference to the Messiah, and the frequency of allusions to it elsewhere in the NT would seem to suggest that it was much used by the early Church to support and underline belief in the lordship and exaltation of Christ³. Our author

himself makes extensive use of the opening verse⁴. It is not, therefore, entirely unreasonable to suppose that when he read on to v.4 (a verse neither quoted or alluded to anywhere else in the NT) he found there a new and exciting way of looking at Christ. Without doubt he made v.4 one of the mainstays of his argument for Christ's priesthood⁵ - some, indeed, would see it as the very foundation⁶. Yet, even if we allow its major significance in the Epistle and agree with C.H. Dodd⁷ that the writer was an innovator with regard to its use, we still have to ask whether Ps. 110:4 led him to the idea of Christ's priesthood, or whether, in fact, the idea led him back to Ps. 110:4.

An important factor in moving towards any conclusion on this is the whole question of whether it really was new for Christians to think of Jesus in priestly terms. We shall discuss this more fully below⁸ but it may be said here that the way is open to explore the implications of a view such as that of A.J.B. Higgins: "The observation that other places in the New Testament outside Hebrews appear to reflect the same idea without using the term priest or high priest suggests that it was not based on Ps. cx.4"⁹. There is the further possibility that there were other passages from Jewish scriptures, or, indeed, contemporary non-Christian beliefs, which could have given rise to Hebrews' priestly Christology. In such a case, Ps. 110:4 might well be confirmatory rather than formative.

2.3 Genesis 14:18-20

The brief mention of Melchizedek in Genesis 14:18-20 provides another potential source for our author's understanding of the person of Christ. Certainly this passage supplies the writer with material he clearly regards as invaluable supportive evidence. He relies on it heavily in chapter 7, where he is putting his case for the permanent priesthood of the exalted Son. The Melchizedek of Genesis is the anticipatory type of the Son of God -

ἡφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ νύμῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ¹⁰. In what seems very much like midrashic fashion¹¹, the mysterious "priest of the most high God" is seen as pointing to the priesthood of Christ in his superiority to the Levitical priesthood (a superiority evidenced by his lack of genealogy - the correct genealogy being essential for "priests of Aaron's line"), his priority in time

and his blessing of Abraham and receiving of tithes. There was also, and perhaps most significantly, the perpetuity of his priesthood. Again, however, we confront the problem of "creative influence" or "scriptural support". Was Genesis 14:18-20 the source of the writer's conviction, or was it rather a major buttress for a pre-existing idea?

In his study on "The Melchizedek Tradition", F.L. Horton¹² argues that the author of Hebrews was taking up and using for his own purposes an interpretation of the Genesis passage already to be found in Philo and Josephus, that is, the notion that Melchizedek was the very first priest¹³. Horton is in little doubt, however, that in laying hold of such a tradition our author was seeking to support an idea that had already formed in his mind. So we read that "in Hebrews the movement is from Christ to Melchizedek and back to Christ, [therefore] it may be argued that the most obvious source for the Epistle's belief in Melchizedek's perpetual priesthood (and the reason why the author found that perpetuity in the words of Ps. cx.4 and in the absence of a reference to Melchizedek's death in Genesis xiv) is the author's belief in the eternal priesthood of Christ"¹⁴. Is it even necessary to posit this "movement...from Christ to Melchizedek and back to Christ"? A.T. Hanson¹⁵ puts forward the interesting argument that, rather than seeing Melchizedek as a type of Christ, the author of Hebrews *identified* the two figures. It was the writer's "private opinion" (in the actual expression of which he went as far as he dared) that "Christ appeared to Abraham in the person of Melchizedek, thereby indicating the superiority of the coming messianic priesthood to the coming Levitical priesthood; and that the eternal priesthood of Christ was formally proclaimed by God through Psalms 2 and 110 by the mouth of David; and finally that the incarnation was the process by which the priesthood actually came into operation"¹⁶. Even if we were to accept this argument (and it would at least help to explain the curious fact that Hebrews makes little attempt to subordinate Melchizedek to Christ), we should still have to ask what caused our author to make such an identification. Did he start from his convictions about Melchizedek or from his convictions about Christ?

Certainly it could be suggested that, seen in the context of the Epistle as a whole, Genesis 14:18-20 is neither the only or the dominating influence.

It serves its purpose in that part of the argument reached at chapter 7 but in terms of sheer volume of reference and emphasis, Psalm 110 would perhaps have a claim to the greater importance. Indeed, it may be that without the impetus of Ps. 110:4, Genesis 14 would not have come into our author's mind at all¹⁷.

2.4 The wilderness experience of the people of Israel

What, then, of the possibility that it was the author's reflection on the significance of Israel's wilderness wanderings that led to his conviction of Christ's priesthood? The wilderness/pilgrim experience of the people of God is undoubtedly a major thread running through the Epistle¹⁸. F.F. Bruce contends that in taking up this thread, the writer was making use of an analogy that was "a commonplace" in the first century Church¹⁹. However this may be, is it reasonable to argue that the instructions for worship and living set out in the Pentateuch in the context of the wilderness experience inspired our author to think in terms of Christ as the supreme Priest? As the holy God made provision then for his blemished people to approach him safely, so "in these last days" has he brought about in Jesus a complete breaking down of barriers, thus enabling direct and fearless access into his very presence. Clearly a comparison between these two provisions, in terms of fulfilment and contrast, was a significant part of the Epistle's argument for Christ's priesthood²⁰. This is seen most obviously in the extensive use our author makes of the Day of Atonement ritual, both in terms of its purpose and its detail (cf. e.g. Heb. 6:19-20; 9:6-12, 24-28; 10:1-10, 19-22). Jesus, as priest and victim, has brought about an atonement which is perfectly and permanently effective, thus rendering unnecessary any further exercise of the provisions of the old order. Our writer does not, however, confine himself to the instructions set out in Leviticus 16 for the yearly act of atonement. Indeed, he is selective even here, for he makes no use of the scapegoat aspect of the ritual (Lev. 16:8, 10, 20ff.) nor, arguably, of the procedure laid down for the cleansing of Aaron's own sin²¹. Woven into his treatment of the Day of Atonement pattern are various other strands to do with cleansing and dedication, notably the whole range of sacrificial offerings (Heb. 10:5-10)²², the purification ceremony involving the use of a heifer (Heb. 9:13 and perhaps 9:19-20; cf. Numbers 19), and, most significantly, the ceremonial required for the establishment of a

covenant (Heb. 8:6ff.; 9:15-22; 10:12-18; cf. Ex. 24:6-8). It would seem that for the author of Hebrews, the notion of the priesthood of Christ drew together and expressed the fulfilment of the whole spectrum of the aspirations, experience and provision for weakness and failure of the old covenant. From the person and work of Jesus, the great High Priest, proceeded a new wilderness experience (cf. e.g. Heb. 3:7-14, 16), a new covenant (cf. e.g. Heb. 2:2ff.; 8; 9:15-22; 10:12-18), a new priesthood and atonement (cf. e.g. 5:5ff.; 6:20; 7 passim), indeed, the consummation of God's purposes for his people.

It might well be argued, however, that the notion of Christ's priesthood gave rise to such a way of looking at the OT, rather than *vice versa*. Having come to the Christological idea, our author, in his careful way, argued for its validity by means of material familiar and meaningful to him and also, surely, to his readers²³. Such would be Moffatt's conclusion. He writes, "it is not enough to say that the conception [of Christ's priesthood] was merely... the result of a bible reading in the pentateuch. In the pentateuch the writer found proofs of what he had brought to it"²⁴. What he brought to it was the conviction that Jesus Christ had dealt with sin and opened the way to God. It was this conviction, perhaps, which coloured his reading of and approach to the OT. Like the other NT writers, he looked at the Jewish scriptures through Christian spectacles.

2.5 A priestly or priestly/royal Messiah

Did the same apply with regard to existing Jewish expectation of a priestly or priestly/royal Messiah? We have first of all to ask whether such an expectation was, in fact, in existence. To consider the evidence, we must turn chiefly to the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs and the Dead Sea Scrolls. At first sight, the Testaments give us a fairly comprehensive picture of a Levitical messianic priest - a picture, moreover, which seems to bear some relation to the characteristics of the priestly Christ as set forth in Hebrews. We read in Test. Levi 8:12ff., "Levi, your posterity shall be divided into three offices as a sign of the glory of the Lord who is coming. The first lot shall be great; no other shall be greater than it. The second shall be in the priestly role. But the third shall be granted a new name because from Judah a

king will arise and shall found a new priesthood in accord with the Gentile model and for all nations. His presence is beloved, as a prophet of the Most High, a descendant of Abraham, our father"²⁵. In this "new priesthood", then, are combined the offices of prophet, priest and king. Further, the earlier part of chapter 8 portrays Levi receiving the emblems of priesthood and king in a heavenly setting²⁶.

Test. Levi 18 talks of the Lord raising up "a new priest" and eulogizes about the blessings he will bring, blessings characteristic of the messianic age. He will bring light and peace and joy, to "the heavens...and the earth" as well as to mankind²⁷. He will bring knowledge of the Lord to the Gentiles and will reveal God's glory²⁸. "In his priesthood sin shall cease", paradise be regained and Beliar bound²⁹. It is indeed tempting to draw parallels with Hebrews, especially when, earlier in the Testament, Levi himself is described as becoming God's son and servant, separate from iniquity³⁰.

The case for a significant relationship would be strengthened if the "new priesthood" of Test. Levi could be shown to be "after the order of Melchizedek". Here we are most definitely in the realm of conjecture and supposition. If we suppose that the relevant passages in the Testaments refer to the Hasmonean rulers, John Hyrcanus in particular³¹, then a connection could be made with their assumption of the title "priests of the Most High God"³², a reasonably clear allusion to the priesthood of Melchizedek. The writer of Hebrews seems to have been not unaffected by the Maccabean literature³³. Could it be, then, that the Hasmonean priesthood provided the model on which he based his concept of Christ's Melchizedekian priesthood³⁴ and that in the Testaments he found material which further stimulated his thoughts in a priestly/messianic direction?

Several important and controversial questions stand in the way of a definite conclusion. When were the Testaments written? Do they constitute a pre-Christian Jewish document?³⁵ Are they rather of Christian origin?³⁶ Or are they basically Jewish with Christian interpolations?³⁷ If the latter, where exactly are the interpolations to be found? Do they in fact cover virtually all those passages which could be interpreted as setting forth a

priestly/royal Messiah, as scholars like M. de Jonge and A.J.B. Higgins³⁸ would argue? This being so, the case for the Testaments' being a source of Hebrews' priestly Christology would be much weakened. Indeed, the case could be reversed, suggesting that Hebrews influenced the relevant passages in the Testaments³⁹, though we should not perhaps rule out the possibility that the author's thinking *could* have been affected by a *Christian* version of the Testaments.

Even if one prefers to take the view that the Testaments are predominantly Jewish and pre-Christian, the nature of the evidence they present has to be carefully examined. There are those who would question whether we do here have a picture of a messianic Priest or Priest/King. Higgins, for example, sees in what he considers to be the original Jewish version of the Testaments a marked absence "of the notion of a priestly *Messiah*, coupled with the importance attached to the *priesthood*, and its superiority to the secular power"⁴⁰. Certainly it is possible to regard the Testaments as simply a reflection of a particular politico-religious situation rather than a looking forward to the characteristics of a future messianic age. Yet who is to say that a pious author did not see in the signs of his times at least an imminent fulfilment of God's eschatological purposes for his people - a fulfilment that involved a "new priesthood", expressed in kingship as well as sacerdotal status? Perhaps the only sure conclusion that can be reached on the origin and character of the Testaments is that there is a wide divergence of opinion coupled with a scarcity of "hard evidence" on which opinion can be based.

If we take the text at more or less its face value, is it in fact very close to the ideas expressed in Hebrews? We have seen that there do appear to be similarities. The "new priest" is also to be prophet and king. He is to be called by a new name and in his priesthood sin will come to an end, the power of evil be bound, and the original perfection of creation restored. So Jesus Christ, great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, supreme Prophet and King, deals with sin, defeats the devil and enables many sons to be brought to "glory", that true destiny originally intended for them by their Creator. Yet nowhere in the Testaments is there that emphasis on the new priest's atoning function, so unmistakeably present in Hebrews. There is but one mention of

sin coming to an end and no indication that this is to be brought about by the priest's willing sacrifice of himself⁴¹. Neither is there any conception of a heavenly priesthood. Levi's "heavenly investiture" is the prelude to and authorisation for an earthly ministry. The Levitical "third office" of Test. Levi 8 is likewise to be realised in an earthly context. Not so with Christ. Hebrews is insistent that "if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all" (8:4). He is not only in reality what Levi could only be ritually, i.e. "separated from sinners", but also "exalted above the heavens", "seated at the right hand of the throne of Majesty in heaven". Further, despite the reference in Test. Levi 8 to the new priesthood's being called by a new name, it is clear from the context that it is still conceived of as being of *Levitical* descent (perhaps, incidentally, an argument against characterising this passage as a Christian interpolation). If the Melchizedek of Ps. 110:4 and Genesis 14 is in mind here, then we must also assume something like the later rabbinic conviction that Melchizedek passed on his priesthood to Abraham and his seed, and therefore to Levi⁴². In Hebrews, however, it is one of the bases of the author's argument that Jesus was not of the tribe of Levi - his priesthood was of a completely different order (cf. Heb. 7:11-14)⁴³.

Could these significant differences, then, be construed as a deliberate attack upon the ideas expressed in the Testaments, perhaps because Hebrews' readers (as converted priests?) were too much influenced by them? It would seem to be an unlikely suggestion. In this case, surely, there would have been in Hebrews some rather more definite reference to the other text in an attempt to show its error and inadequacy. Quotations and allusions are, after all, an integral part of our author's methodology. Not only that. We might also have expected the author to have treated more fully of Jesus' non-Levitical descent. Such a major contrast to the figure of the new priest in the Testaments, if this latter were the main 'target', would seem to require a somewhat more detailed discussion. As it is, Jesus' lack of genealogical qualification for the Levitical priesthood appears to have been taken by the writer as a generally accepted fact (cf. Heb. 7:14) - something he could use as a springboard with the minimum of apology or explanation. Similarly, he makes little attempt to prove that Jesus was both Messiah and King. In effect, it is assumed that this can be taken as read.

Considerations such as these, together with the clearly differing conceptions of the new priesthood and the serious problems involved in establishing the date and character of the Testaments, would seem to advise caution in postulating any directly causal link between them and our Epistle. Is the position different with the Dead Sea Scrolls? There is certainly no shortage of scholars who would argue for a significant connection between Hebrews and the Qumran community⁴⁴. Some would agree with Yadin that the addressees of the Epistle "must have been a group of Jews originally belonging to the D.S.S. sect who were converted to Christianity, carrying with them some of their previous beliefs"⁴⁵. It was to counter-act these previous beliefs that Hebrews was written. Others would contend that the beliefs set forward in the Dead Sea Scrolls should not be regarded as unique to the Qumran covenanters but rather as illustrative of the ideals of the more widespread Essene movement⁴⁶. The recipients of the Epistle should thus be regarded as including those who had been in some way influenced by Essene ideals. F.F. Bruce, on the other hand, concludes that "the Hebrews" were "a group of Jewish Christians, whose antecedents and associations were with nonconformist Judaism rather than with the main streams... it would be outstripping the evidence to call them Essenes or spiritual brethren to the men of Qumran"⁴⁷. Against all these would be those scholars, like E. Grässer⁴⁸ and Montefiore⁴⁹, who reject any close relationship between our Epistle and the ideas expressed in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

It is in the context of such controversy that we must explore the possibility that Hebrews' priestly Christology was stimulated by the Qumran expectation of a priestly Messiah. It would appear, at least from one reading of the texts⁵⁰, that the Dead Sea Covenanters were awaiting two messianic figures - one Davidic and kingly, the other, of superior status, a priestly Messiah. Both were to be subordinate to the archangel Michael, and their advent was to be linked with the appearance of an eschatological prophet and the resumption, in a pure form, of the Mosaic sacrificial system. It was to counter such expectations, argue Yadin and others, that the author of Hebrews emphasized the unique supremacy of Christ, the concentration in his Person of the rôles of prophet, priest and king, and the bringing to its end of the old order. If this is the case, however, we need to ask why our author did not spend much

time and effort on seeking to prove that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. It is debatable how far the author uses ὁ Χριστός in a titular sense. Even granting that he does, the references are few and in the context of assumption rather than argument⁵¹. Further - and perhaps more significant - Hebrews, as we have seen, makes little attempt to argue through Jesus' non-Levitical descent, a factor which would surely have been a major stumbling-block for readers with a background such as Yadin envisages. The 'Messiah of Aaron' was to be of that lineage and no other. Lack of the correct genealogy would have destroyed that ritual and sacerdotal purity so earnestly longed for by the Qumran Community. If the readers of Hebrews were former members of that community, would the contention that Christ's priesthood was "after the order of Melchizedek" have sufficiently allayed their fears?

The possibility of a causal link between the Dead Sea Scrolls and Hebrews is further undermined if Higgins is correct in his thesis that the Qumran Covenanters were not in fact expecting a priestly Messiah⁵². Having examined those passages where the terms "anointed one" or "anointed ones" are used in an apparently messianic sense⁵³, he concludes that "at Qumran there was not a belief in a secular and priestly Messiah, but only in a messianic Davidic prince and deliverer"⁵⁴. He points out that the title "Messiah of Aaron" is never used on its own and contends that in those references where the Messiah is said to be 'of' or 'from' Aaron and Israel, the latter two names are simply a description of the Qumran community, a community made up of priests and laymen. In the one plural reference to "the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel" (1 QS ix 10f.), "anointed ones", according to Higgins, is not used in a technically messianic sense. So, he argues, "The High Priest is as much... an anointed one, but not a messianic figure in the full sense. He is the future religious head at the time when Messiah is to appear, just as the community has a priest as its superior. It is because of his position as *the religious head* that even the Messiah will be subordinate to him"⁵⁵.

However this may be, Higgins points to a factor of considerable importance which applies whatever view one takes of the priestly figure in the Scrolls. "Neither the Messiah nor the priestly head of the community in the last days has any special soteriological character"⁵⁶. The most important

task of the eschatological priest appears to be expounding the Law rather than making atonement. We must ask ourselves, therefore, whether such would be an adequate 'seed-bed' for a writer like the author of Hebrews who is so deeply concerned with the atoning function of Jesus, priest and victim. What, too, of his conviction that this priest/victim has not only been exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high but is also from eternity the "ἀπαύγασμα" and "Χαρακτὴρ" of that Majesty⁵⁷? We may feel, perhaps, that neither the anointed priest of the D.S.S., nor indeed the "new priest" of the Testaments, is sufficient in itself to explain these things.

2.6 11Q Melchizedek

Perhaps, though, there was some existing concept of an eschatological heavenly figure which could have influenced the author's understanding and presentation of Jesus. The discovery of a fragmentary document in Cave 11 at Qumran⁵⁸ seemed to supply such a figure. Here, one called Melchizedek, an exalted, heavenly being, is assigned a significant (if not altogether clear) rôle in the execution of divine judgement, which occurs in the context of the ultimate year of jubilee. Melchizedek is to "exact the ven[ge]lance of the jud[gm]ents of God" with the help of "all the [eternall] gods"⁵⁹. If the quotation of Ps. 82:1 in line 10 is also to be applied to him, then he enjoys a very high status indeed⁶⁰. More certainly, he is seen to have great individual importance among "the holy ones of God". He is a powerful angelic figure (whether or not he be identified with Michael⁶¹) who will be instrumental in the downfall of Belial⁶² and perhaps have some connection with the atonement for sin that will apparently accompany "the year of the la[st] jubilee"⁶³.

Such features of 11Q Melchizedek have encouraged some scholars to postulate a close relationship between this document and Hebrews. De Jonge and Van de Woude, for example, suggest that "Heb. 7:3 and related texts are most naturally explained by the supposition that the author regarded Melchizedek as an angel inferior to the Son of God. ...Not the expected high-priest of the sect, but the archangel who would command the heavenly hosts in the struggle against Belial influenced Hebrews' picture of the entirely different "priest like Melchizedek" who had come... All interest is centred in the

Heavenly Son of God, who rules above all heavenly and earthly powers, and lives for ever to make intercession for those who put their trust in him; his counterpart is the heavenly Melchizedek whom we find in 11Q Melchizedek⁶⁴. Others would not be so certain. Fitzmyer concludes that "the tradition found here is not the same as that in Hebrews, even though it does shed some light on the more general development"⁶⁵. F.L. Horton argues categorically that 11Q Melchizedek "is not a direct source for Hebrews"⁶⁶. He concedes that there are general parallels between the Qumran Melchizedek and the Christ of Hebrews. Both are eschatological, redemptive figures, both are exalted in the heaven. both are involved in atonement for sin, both overcome the forces opposed to God and bring the promise of a new age⁶⁷. However, he points out that all of these similarities could equally apply to other parts of the New Testament and goes on to conjecture that "if the author of Hebrews had known of the speculation about Melchizedek contained in 11Q Melchizedek, he might well have rejected Melchizedek as a type of Christ"⁶⁸.

Certainly we could point to a number of major differences between the figures set forward in the two documents. In 11Q Melchizedek as we have it, there is little stress on Melchizedek's atoning function⁶⁹. There is no reference to his offering sacrifice for sin, let alone his offering of himself as sacrificial victim. In fact, it is not at all clear from the Qumran fragment that Melchizedek was regarded as a priest at all. The absence of any citation of Genesis 14:18-20 or Ps. 110:4 is notable, particularly in view of their evident importance for the author of Hebrews. Neither is there any indication that the Qumran Melchizedek was a human being who led a truly human existence, subject to temptation, suffering and death. *Face de Jonge* and *van de Woude*, this emphasis is surely as significant in Hebrews as the stress on the heavenly Son of God. Without that emphasis, the author's argument tends rather to lose its point. We may note also that the Qumran document sees Melchizedek's special role as the eschatological execution of divine judgement. This contrasts sharply with the position in Hebrews, where Christ is never portrayed as 'judge', though some attention is given to God's activity in this area⁷⁰.

It is surely significant, too, that our author shows no sign of regarding Melchizedek as an angel or archangel. No mention is made of Melchizedek in chapters 1 and 2, where Christ's superiority over the angels is being emphasized in no uncertain terms. Indeed, there seems little attempt in Hebrews to press the point that Christ is greater than Melchizedek - to the extent, it would seem, that certain elements in the early Church came to regard Christ as *inferior*⁷¹. This suggests, perhaps, that it was not our author's prime concern to present Christ as a fulfilment or a corrective of the heavenly Melchizedek figure of the Qumran document. It may be argued that his conviction of Christ's priesthood was paramount and that the Melchizedek who is brought into service to support that conviction is the Melchizedek of the Old Testament rather than the eschatological figure who emerges from the Cave 11 fragment. This latter figure, moreover, is to be found nowhere else in the literature that might be relevant to Hebrews - not even in the other Qumran scrolls or in writings like Ethiopian Enoch which have much to say about the role of angels.

The only other Qumran document in which Melchizedek's name appears is the Genesis Apocryphon. Col. XXII refers to his meeting with Abraham but there is no suggestion that he is a "heavenly figure". Josephus refers to Melchizedek in War vi. 438 and Antiquities 1.179-81. In the former, Josephus argues that it was because Melchizedek was 'king of righteousness' that he was "the first priest of God and the first to build the Temple and in its honour to give the name of Jerusalem to the City, previously called Salem". Antiquities, in relating the meeting with Abraham, displays a similar line of thinking. Again, Melchizedek is not portrayed as an eschatological figure. For Philo, Melchizedek as the first and "self-taught" priest is a type of the Logos (cf. Leg. Alleg, III 79-82; De Congressu 99; De Abrahamo 235)⁷².

O. Cullmann⁷³ claims that "at the time of Jesus" there "must... have been speculations in Judaism which identified Melchizedek himself if not with the Messiah, at least with other eschatological figures". Cullmann agrees with Käsemann⁷⁴, who asserts "Auch Melchisedek kann als Inkarnation des Urmenschen und insofern als Träger der messianischen Hohenpriestwürde erscheinen, wie anderswo Moses, Elias-Pinechas, Metatron, Sem oder Michael". Such claims, however, may be said to be based very much on a 'reading back' of later

material. The fact remains that, to our present knowledge, at the time when Hebrews was written, there was no documentary material (apart, perhaps, from 11Q Melchizedek) which set forth Melchizedek as an eschatological redeemer figure. In any case, did the author of Hebrews really see Melchizedek in this light?⁷⁵?

We may note D.M. Hay's conclusion: "To specify precisely which traditions... the epistle's author knew and which he did not, is impossible"⁷⁶. Enthusiasm about 11Q Melchizedek in relation to Hebrews should surely be tempered with a considerable degree of caution.

2.7 Michael

Extreme caution is also advisable when assessing the influence of other 'heavenly' figures discernible in the Judaism of the early Christian period. It is relatively easy to point to possibilities. It is far more difficult to produce from Hebrews itself convincing evidence of a significant relationship. We may take, for example, beliefs concerning the archangel Michael. He was Israel's 'guardian angel'⁷⁷, the champion of God's people⁷⁸, the instrument of God's vengeance upon their enemies⁷⁹, the victorious leader of the heavenly hosts in the final battle against the forces of evil⁸⁰. Thus far he is the supreme angelic warrior rather than the great, heavenly priest. Some would point, even so, to a parallel with Heb. 2:14-16⁸¹, where Jesus is said to have destroyed the devil in concern for the "seed of Abraham". The content and context of the passage, however, argue against any very close connection. There is no mention of a dramatic military conflict, nor of the taking of vengeance. Christ's conquest of evil was "ἡ νίκη τοῦ θανάτου", something never posited of Michael. In order to die this saving death, Jesus had to partake of flesh and blood and "be made like his brethren in every respect" - a further contrast with the archangel. So far as we know from the literature, there was no belief that Michael either became human or experienced suffering. In Hebrews, Christ's battle with the devil, like his priesthood, was of a completely different order.

There are instances, though, where Michael is regarded as something like a heavenly high priest. Test. Dan. 6:1f. reads: "And now, fear the Lord, my children, be on guard against Satan and his spirits. Draw near to God and to the angel who intercedes for you²², because he is the mediator between God and men for the peace of Israel. He shall stand in opposition to the kingdom of the enemy". The phrase "μεσίτης Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων" is notable for its correspondence with 1 Tim. 2:5, though the latter passage stresses the human character of the mediator. As regards Hebrews, on each of the three occasions when the word μεσίτης is used of Jesus²³, it is in the context of his mediation of a new covenant. He is not so much standing as an intermediary between God and man as opening the way for that direct relationship with God which God desires. There is no hint of this function in Test. Dan. 6:1f. The angel intercedes for God's people and stands up against their enemy, but he is not said to be instrumental in bringing about a new covenant, still less that, having become human, he offered himself willingly as a sacrificial victim. This omission still applies in those passages of the Babylonian Talmud where Michael is portrayed as the high priest officiating in the heavenly Temple²⁴.

We may note, further, that Hebrews contains no direct reference to Michael. The case for indirect allusions is also, surely, slight. In addition to the arguments advanced above, we may point to the context of that passage in the Epistle where Jesus is said to always live to make intercession for those who draw near to God through him (7:25). At this stage in the author's exposition, angels are notable by their absence. The contrast is with the inadequacy and impermanence of the human priests of the old covenant and it is stressed that "κρείττονος διαθήκης γέγονεν ἕγγυος ἰησοῦς" (7:22). It would seem unlikely, then, that the writer had Michael in mind as a model either to build on or to undermine.

2.8. Priestly angels

The same is true, perhaps, of the notion of 'priestly angels' in a more general sense. Angelic intercessors were certainly not unknown in the Judaism of the first century A.D. They occur in the Old Testament (cf. Job 5:1; 33:23;

Zech. 1:12) and on numerous occasions in 1 Enoch⁸⁵. There was also a belief amongst at least some strands of Judaism that angels carried human prayers to God (cf. 1QH 6.131), a belief not entirely approved of in Rabbinic circles⁸⁶. In Test. Levi 3:5-6 we are also told of "the archangels, who serve and offer propitiatory sacrifices to the Lord in behalf of all the sins of ignorance of the righteous ones. They present to the Lord a pleasing odor, a rational and bloodless oblation ". Some of the Qumran material suggests the notion that angels could help people to find acceptance with God (cf. 1QS 3:18ff.; 1QM 13:9f). The author of Hebrews may well have been aware of such ideas, but there is little indication that they have been profoundly influential in forming his doctrine of the priesthood of Christ. The matter of the angels' inferiority to the Son is disposed of in the first two chapters and does not reappear. In the author's detailed examination of Christ's priesthood and priestly work, no comparison or contrast is made with angelic activity. Moreover, it could be argued that the main emphasis in chapters 1 and 2 is

on the angels' inability to 'compete' with the Son's status as God's ultimate messenger, the mediator of a new and perfect covenant (cf. Heb. 2:2ff.). Indeed, the juxtaposition of verses 16 and 17 in chapter 2 might well suggest that the author did not readily think of angels in terms of sacrificial priesthood. The latter, for him, was inextricably bound up with the experience of being fully human. Further, it was axiomatic for the writer of Hebrews that "without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins" (9:22). This at least suggests caution in associating his thought too closely with a passage such as that quoted from Test. Levi 3, with its concept of "a bloodless oblation".

2.9 Enoch

When we turn to the figure of Enoch, we find, in the earlier writings at least, no mention of his making an offering at all. He is privileged to see and record heavenly secrets⁸⁷. He intercedes (unsuccessfully) with the Lord for the "Watchers", those angels who took to wife of the daughters of men⁸⁸ (cf. Gen. 6:1ff.). He is taken up into heaven and, apparently, declared to be the Son of Man⁸⁹. In 2 Enoch, arguably too late to have had any direct influence on Hebrews⁹⁰, Enoch is further described as "redeemer of the sins of

man", a function that seems to be conceived of in terms of intercession rather than sacrifice⁹¹. He is also dressed by Michael in garments of glory and, by divine invitation, is called to stand before the Lord's face into eternity⁹². We may contrast the exalted Christ in Hebrews *sitting down* at God's right hand. Indeed, we may wonder whether the apocalyptic figure of Enoch bears *any* significant relationship to the Jesus of the Epistle. Perhaps the really crucial difference is that Enoch did not die⁹³. Neither was he subject to suffering and temptation. Where he is specifically mentioned in Hebrews (11:5), he is portrayed, not as a heavenly visionary or priest, but as a righteous man who, like the many others catalogued in this chapter, pleased God by his faith. It is a picture derived directly from the LXX⁹⁴.

In 3 Enoch, the translated Enoch is merged with the figure of Metatron, "the Prince of the Presence", "the lesser Yahweh", who occupies a separate heavenly throne and before whom myriads of angels do obeisance⁹⁵. He it is who guides R. Ishmael through the heavens to the Merkabah or Chariot-Throne of God. In front of this throne there is a veil and Metatron is privileged to know, and so to be able to reveal, the details of what lies behind the veil. Numbers Rabbah XII.12 tells us of the construction of a heavenly Tabernacle in which Metatron offers up the souls of the righteous to atone for Israel's sins. In the Babylonian Talmud, Metatron appears as intercessor and intermediary, Israel's advocate with God⁹⁶. Do we have here, then, a tradition of a heavenly guide and priest of exalted status which could have influenced the thinking of Hebrews? There are those (notably O. Hofius, H.M. Schencke and R. Williamson) who would consider this a distinct possibility, arguing that the writer of the Epistle came from a background of an early form of Jewish Merkabah mysticism⁹⁷.

2.10 Jewish Merkabah mysticism

R. Williamson claims that there are "numerous parallels in thought and language" between Hebrews and the Merkabah tradition of Judaism⁹⁸. Hebrews talks of the throne of God, of the divine majesty, holiness and glory - all significant features of Merkabah mysticism. Both have much to say about angels. In the Epistle, Christ, having "passed through the heavens", is exalted

above them and has entered "into the inner shrine behind the curtain". He enables his followers also to draw near with confidence to the throne of grace. He makes atonement for them. This corresponds with Metatron, who is privileged to enter the presence of God, who guides the mystic through the heavens and who ministers in the heavenly sanctuary, interceding and making atonement offerings. There is, further, a shared stress on the theme of pilgrimage and ascent.

Have we, therefore, found the key to Hebrews' presentation of Jesus as the heavenly high priest. There are serious objections to such a suggestion. Williamson himself concedes that "It is arguable that the alleged similarities of Hebrews to Merkabah language and thought can be explained simply on the basis of a common indebtedness to the Old Testament"⁹⁹. He allows, too, that "the bulk of the literature mentioned in the studies of Merkabah mysticism is later than the New Testament"¹⁰⁰, though he would want to argue that the literature is giving expression to ideas which have a much earlier provenance. Even granting this, do these ideas, in fact, bear such a close relation to Hebrews as scholars such as Williamson and Schenke would argue? It may be suggested that the correspondences are more superficial than profound. Many *could* well be accounted for by reference to the Old Testament and features of contemporary Judaism not peculiar to Merkabah mysticism (cf. e.g. the nature and character of God, beliefs concerning angels, the notion of a heavenly sanctuary, the idea of pilgrimage, the imagery of fire)¹⁰¹

The God presented in Hebrews is indeed a holy God. His portrayal, however, could plausibly be explained by reference to deuteronomic theology. The majority of those passages which underline the fearfulness of God are, in fact, direct quotations from or allusions to Deuteronomy (Heb. 10:28 cf. Deut. 17:6; Heb. 10:30 cf. Deut. 32:35-36; Heb.12:18ff. cf. Deut. 4:11, 36; 5:23; 9:19; Heb. 12:29 cf. Deut. 4:24; 9:3). Our author does make use of Ezekiel - but in the context of 'heart-cleansing' rather than apocalyptic vision (Heb. 10:22 cf. Ez. 36:25). There is no reference to Ezekiel's experiences of the heavenly Chariot-Throne. *Ἀρματός*, the word used in 1 Chron. 28:18 to describe the Ark of the Covenant (in terms reminiscent of Ezekiel's vision) does not occur in Hebrews, not even at 9:5 where the author refers to the cherubim of glory

overshadowing the mercy seat. At this stage in his exposition the allusion is clearly to Exodus (cf. Ex. 15:20 LXX).

Θρόνος appears four times (Heb. 1:8; 4:16; 8:1; 12:2), on each occasion in close association with God. However, two of the references (8:1 and 12:2) are in the context of an allusion to Ps. 110:1. As regards the other two references, 1:8 is a quotation of Ps. 44:7 (LXX) and 4:16 speaks of approaching the 'throne of grace' not so much to be 'lost in wonder, love and praise' as to 'receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need'. There is no hint in any of these instances that it is to be connected with visionary experience after the manner of the Merkabah mystic.

The same is true in respect of the three references in Hebrews (6:19; 9:31; 10:20) to the καταπέτασμα, a word found elsewhere in the NT only in connection with the rending of the Temple veil at the time of the Crucifixion¹⁰². In fact, there seems to be no compelling reason why Hebrews' usage of the word should be linked in any direct way with the *pargod* or veil which, for Merkabah mystics, separated the One who sits on the throne from the other parts of the heavenly Chariot¹⁰³. None of the instances of καταπέτασμα in our Epistle occurs in close relation to the word Θρόνος. 6:19-20 speaks of Jesus going as a fore-runner "into the inner shrine behind the curtain" (εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπέτασματος). This could conceivably be a reference to the idea held by some mystics that privileged angels, and in particular Metatron, ministered behind the *pargod*¹⁰⁴. Yet the thought expressed in Hebrews can be more readily explained in terms of pentateuchal imagery. In Leviticus 16:2 (and thus in the chapter dealing with the regulations for the ritual of the Day of Atonement) we read that "the Lord said to Moses, 'Speak to Aaron thy brother, and let him not come at all times into the holy place within the veil' (ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπέτασματος)". It is clear that the Day of Atonement pattern played a significant part in our author's thinking, and what he has in mind in 6:19f is surely Jesus' perfect fulfilment of what was foreshadowed in the Levitical ritual. Jesus, like Aaron, enters the Holy of Holies but with permanent atoning effect, thus providing a sure ground for hope and encouragement (6:18, 19). It is important, perhaps, that Jesus' high priestly activity in entering behind the veil brings about a cleansed relationship with God and ἰσχυρὰν παράκλησιν,

rather than ecstatic vision. Further, as we shall see below¹⁰⁵, the concept of a heavenly Temple, implied at 6:19f, is certainly not exclusive to Merkabah mysticism.

The reference at 9:3 is simply part of a description of the earthly sanctuary of the first covenant (cf. 9:1). That at 10:20 talks of Jesus, by his blood, opening up a new and living way into the Holy of Holies (διὰ τοῦ καταπέτασματος, τοῦτ' ἐστὶν τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ). Whatever view is taken of the relationship between "the veil" and "his flesh"¹⁰⁶, it seems clear from the context that again our author is basing his exposition on the ritual of the Day of Atonement. As P.E. Hughes puts it, "the 'veil' of which our author is speaking should be interpreted with reference to the curtain through which the high priest had to pass in order to enter the holy of holies once a year"¹⁰⁷. The possibility of 'mystical influence' becomes even less likely if we accept that reading of the passage which is typified by Owen's comment: "that by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, wherein his flesh was torn and rent, we have a full entrance into the holy place, such as would have been of old upon the rending of the veil"¹⁰⁸. It is difficult to find in Merkabah mysticism anything that answers to the concept of human flesh "torn and rent" in sacrifice in order to open up permanently the way to God. The figure of Metatron, even if he existed as an important factor in mysticism at the time of our Epistle, cannot provide such a model. If he has had a human experience (e.g. as Enoch), it is of no saving significance. There is no hint of his being made "for a little while lower than the angels" (Heb. 2: 7, 9), subject to suffering and temptation and, by the willing sacrificial offering of himself, tasting death for everyone. He can only continue to offer the souls of the righteous in atonement for Israel's sin, whereas Christ, according to Hebrews, "offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins", securing an eternal redemption by the sacrifice of himself (Heb. 10:12; 9:12). It is through this unrepeatable self-offering that Christ opens up the way to God. He is not so much the guide of the privileged mystic through the mysterious heavens as the blazer of a trail to God which all can follow. The approach to God made possible through Jesus is undertaken so that the worshipper, in drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace, "may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). The aim,

according to our Epistle, does not seem to be an ecstatic, mystical experience, a vision of "the silent God"¹⁰⁹. The God of Hebrews responds and communicates. Indeed, it is his will to communicate and save that is stressed in the Epistle (cf. Heb. 1:1-2; 2:10) and is at the heart of the author's theology. There is no indication either that 'drawing near' involves concentrated ascetic exercises such as those the Merkabah mystics employed in order to get themselves into the 'right' condition for making the mystical journey. Details of such preparation given in the 'heikhalot' literature¹¹⁰ seem far removed from the message of Hebrews. A God of sovereign majesty and holiness we do find in the Epistle. He is to be approached with reverence and awe but not by means of induced trance-like states and the recitation of quasi-magical formulae. The prerequisite is, rather, that 'heart-cleansing' effected by the work of Jesus and a consequent attitude of *παρρησία*, boldness (cf., e.g., Heb. 10:19-22). Drawing near to God is indeed a privilege, but it is a privilege available to all who wish to follow the way opened up by Jesus. There is no suggestion that it is reserved for selected members of the Christian community. If any are failing to take advantage of the 'new and living way' it is because of their own unwillingness and immaturity (Heb. 5:11ff.). Merkabah mystics were extremely wary of communicating information about their experience. R. ben Zakkai, for example, tells his student that the doctrine of the Merkabah is a secret undertaking. Only one student can be present when it is divulged and he must be wise and have an understanding of himself¹¹¹. By contrast, the Christian approach to the throne of grace, as expounded in Hebrews, is a *community* activity, not just an individual spiritual adventure. The author's exhortations to 'draw near' are evidently addressed to *all* the recipients, and in one instance the context includes a directive to continue meeting together (Heb. 10:19-25). It is expected, moreover, that these people should be teachers (Heb. 5:12) and what they should be teaching surely includes that message so close to our author's heart, that through Jesus those who will can come directly into the presence of God¹¹². It is a generally applicable consequence of the work of Jesus, the great High Priest, whose offering inaugurated that new covenant relationship in which all should know the Lord, "from the least of them to the greatest" (Heb. 8:6-13).

Mention of the 'new covenant' points to another difficulty in accepting Merkabah mysticism, as a major formative influence on our Epistle. That Jesus is "surety of a better covenant" (Heb. 7:22) is a fundamental and pervasive part of the author's argument. It is a significant element in his concern to show Christ's superiority to the angels (cf. Heb. 2:2-4). Yet there seems to be little indication in what we know of Merkabah mysticism that the Merkabah 'experience' was in any way connected with a new covenant such as that envisaged by Jeremiah. Perhaps the nearest we come to such a conjunction is in the Qumran Community, whose members believed they belonged to the New Covenant (cf., e.g. CD. vi.19) and whose literature suggests that 'Throne-mysticism' was not unknown there (see esp. Angelic Liturgy 2:9)¹³. It is not clear, however, whether a mystical approach to God was believed to be a general consequence of membership of the new covenant community¹⁴.

In Hebrews, the idea of the new covenant is associated particularly with the forgiveness of sins (Heb. 8:12; 10:17-18), and thus the breaking down of that barrier of sin which prevents confident access to God. It is difficult to discern in Merkabah mysticism such a profound soteriological emphasis. In our Epistle, moreover, access to God has very 'down-to-earth' implications. It not only provides 'grace to help in time of need' (4:16) but also requires the continuous offering of a 'sacrifice of praise' (13:15), defined not so much in terms of celestial hymnody (an important part of Chariot mysticism¹⁵) as of 'doing good' and 'confessing' God's name (13:15, 16). It is also stressed in Hebrews that God himself initiates and carries through the whole 'salvation process'. He is not a God who hides himself, only to be disclosed to a courageous and carefully prepared few. He it is who leads many sons to glory (2:10). He it is who has spoken to us salvifically ἐν υἱῷ (1:2). That Son who is ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ (1:3) carries out from first to last the will and work of God (10:5ff.). It is surely clear from chapters 1 and 2 that when we look at Jesus we are to see God in action¹⁷. Could such a statement be applied to Metatron - or, indeed, to any of the "heavenly redeemer figures" so far mentioned? It is arguably very difficult to fit them readily into that relationship with God and his activity proclaimed of Christ in Heb. 1:1-4.

2.11 Moses

Could Moses perhaps have a better claim? He was certainly held in very high regard by the whole range of first century Judaism. Philo's interpretation, for instance, presents Moses as an extremely honoured and exalted figure. He was "the greatest and most perfect of men"¹¹⁸, the "best of kings, of law-givers and high priests"¹¹⁹. His high-priestly prayers for the people were always heard because of his life of perfect virtue¹²⁰. Not only this, but he could also be called "the divine, holy Moses"¹²¹. It could be asked of him, "Was not the joy of his partnership with the Father and Maker of all magnified also by the honour of being deemed to bear the same title?"¹²² He could be described as having a second, divine birth which involved no mother "but only a father, who is [the Father] of all"¹²³. Prayer could be made to him¹²⁴. He possessed the cosmos as God's heir¹²⁵. He was closely associated with the divine Logos, that 'point of intersection' between God and man¹²⁶. It would seem, therefore, that for Philo, Moses was the perfect man, endued with singular divine honours.

However, it is important to remember that in Philo's interpretation, the significance of Moses lay in his close connection with the realm of pure mind or reason and his consequent capacity to reveal and mediate God's law. It was a basic principle for Philo that God could have no direct contact with matter. Therefore Moses, as the supreme recipient of God's message to his people, must have been less bound up than other men with the imperfect material world. Thus in *De somn.* 1:36, we learn that when on Mt. Sinai Moses became incorporeal for forty days. It was only in this kind of way that Moses could come "into the darkness where God was" - and it was only through such privileged "super-human" communion with God that Moses could be thought of as enjoying a measure of 'divinization'. Insofar as he was drawn out of the realm of material imperfection and into the purer atmosphere of 'mind' or 'reason', he could be described as being, in effect, like God. It is a notion grounded on Greek philosophy¹²⁷. It is also a notion difficult to detect in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In Hebrews, the movement is, as it were, in the opposite direction. Here the pre-existent Son, through whom God made the world, voluntarily takes on the body which God has prepared for him. His qualification for mediating God's new covenant was a thoroughly human existence, subject to weakness and temptation. His being 'made perfect' was a realization of full humanity as God intended it to be. Neither is there any suggestion that this 'full humanity' was transmuted into 'pure mind' in the exalted Jesus. "Ὁσιος, ἀκακος, ἀμίαντος, κεχωρισμένος ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν" he may be, but, equally, "οὐ -- ἔχομεν ἄρχιερέα μὴ δυνάμενον συμπάθεσαι τῆς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν" (Heb. 7:26 & 4:15). The heavenly High Priest of Hebrews is such in his glorified humanity. Further, he continues (ὢν) to be "ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως [τοῦ Θεοῦ]" (Heb. 1:3). In view of this, it is difficult to avoid at least considering the implication that, for the author of Hebrews, human experience is something that, in his Son, God embraces, redeems and takes eternally to himself. To Philo such a concept would be, to say the least, uncongenial.

It should also be remembered that in many places Philo treats Moses as an allegorical rather than an historical figure. He is ἱερός λογος, that purity of thought inherent in Scripture²⁰. There is little doubt that, by contrast, the Jesus of Hebrews was an actual human being and that what happened "in the days of his flesh" was of major importance. In particular, of course, Hebrews stresses Jesus' perfect act of atonement διὰ θανάτου, an act which secured "an eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12) - an act that finds no parallel in the Moses tradition. Perhaps, then, we should not be too hasty in assigning to the Philonic Moses the rôle of model or stimulus for the Christ of the Epistle. Indeed, when we look at the figure of Moses in Hebrews, there is not much sign of Philo's brand of interpretation. Moses has a lesser claim than Jesus to 'glory' and 'honour' and his experience and behaviour prefigure that of Christ (Heb. 3:1-6). His persevering faith is also a stirring example to those now running the race that is set before them (Heb. 11:23-28). In all these aspects, the starting point and underlying assumption is that Moses was an historical person whose deeds are recorded in the Jewish Scriptures. There is little indication that he was regarded as "divine", nor is there much obvious stress on his priesthood. The closest potential connection is perhaps

to be found at Heb. 3:1 where, in view of the following contrast between Jesus and Moses, the phrase "Apostle and High Priest" could be regarded as applicable to both figures¹²⁹. In fact, specific 'coverage' of Moses is relatively small in the context of the Epistle as a whole¹³⁰. The comparison between Jesus and Moses is but part of the overall comparison between the new and the old covenants.

This should be borne in mind when considering the influence on Hebrews of other Jewish interpretations of Moses.

"Accordingly He designed and devised me, and He prepared me before the foundation of the world, that I should be the mediator of His covenant", says Moses to Joshua in Ass. Moses 1:14. The same work also presents this predestined, if not pre-existent, mediator of God's covenant as intercessor - the one who intercedes for Israel not only during his earthly life (cf. xi.11, 17) but also in the spiritual realm (cf. xii.6). Rabbinic tradition seems to have deduced from Numbers 12:8 that Moses was to be regarded as even higher than the angels (cf. Sifre 103). Yet despite their apparent correspondences with the presentation of Christ in Hebrews, one has still to question how far these traditions, even if known to our author, could have provided in themselves sufficient inspiration for the notion of Christ as great High Priest. Key elements are missing, not least the act of atonement for sin, involving the death of the priest and his consequent session "at the right hand of the Majesty on high" as Son and messianic Priest/King. It is, further, on the sacrificial aspect of priesthood that Hebrews concentrates most attention and this, by tradition, was vested in Aaron rather than Moses. However important it was for our author to stress Jesus' superiority to Moses as mediator of the new and perfect covenant, it would seem unlikely that Moses provided him with the formative model for Christ's priesthood¹³¹.

2.12 A gnostic redeemer myth

Was he, then, heavily influenced by some form of gnostic redeemer myth, as E. Käsemann, for example, would have us accept¹³²? He argues that the "Anthropos-myth supplies the basis for the Christology of the letter"¹³³. One

of the major problems here is finding evidence for the existence of such a myth in the NT period or earlier¹³⁴. There was undoubtedly speculation within Judaism about the original Adam¹³⁵. Philo, at least, thought that in addition to this earthly man there was also a "heavenly man being made in the image of God... altogether without part or lot in the corruptible or terrestrial substance"¹³⁶. Such speculation may well have been drawn into an early Christianity seeking for fruitful ways of expressing its conviction of the significance of Christ's person and work¹³⁷. As we shall see below, it may have touched the Epistle to the Hebrews¹³⁸. Having said this however, there is little sign in this kind of thinking of a 'redeemer figure', other than in the sense of one who reveals divine 'gnosis'¹³⁹. It is difficult to discern in the first century AD a figure who descends from the heavenly realm to save and claim his own, thus enabling them to ascend with him into heaven. Käsemann finds evidence for such a figure in, for example, Hebrews 2:14, 15¹⁴⁰. He also contends that gnostic influence is apparent on the extensive use made in the Epistle of the word group $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ¹⁴¹. In the author's exhortation to the 'enlightened' (6:4), or those who are $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\omicron\iota$ (5:14), "one recognizes the myth of the Primal Man, in which the redeemer, as leader to Heaven and Home returns himself and thus becomes the 'redeemed Redeemer', equally $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\omega\sigma\eta\varsigma$ and $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\omega\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ ¹⁴².

Käsemann also argues that the redeemer myth underlying Hebrews regarded the First Man as a High Priest. He finds evidence for this in Philo's identification of the Logos as High Priest and in later Jewish speculation which saw successive incarnations of the First Man-High Priest in Melchizedek, Shem, Moses, Elijah, the archangel Michael and the figure of Metatron¹⁴³. We may note, however, that Philo's Logos/High priest has no soteriological function¹⁴⁴ and that it is dangerous to read back into a NT context late speculation which has no obvious foothold there. We have, further, examined the claims of most of the figures mentioned and found them wanting as adequate initiators of the priestly Christology of Hebrews¹⁴⁵. As regards Elijah, it may be said that, where Rabbinic tradition presents him as the eschatological High Priest¹⁴⁶, he is regarded as being of the tribe of Levi and is *not* identified with the Messiah - two significant deficiencies as far as our Epistle is concerned.

Where we may draw close to Käsemann, however, (though not in interpretative detail) is in his conviction that the setting of the Epistle is fundamentally *liturgical*¹⁴⁷.

2.13 Philo's Logos/High Priest

Spicq has little hesitation in endorsing the comment of E. Menegoz that the author of Hebrews "est un philonien converti au christianisme"¹⁴⁸. Many other scholars would want to assert in varying degrees the influence of Philo on our Epistle¹⁴⁹. J. Coppens, for example, finds in Philo's 'Logos' doctrine a primary source for the Christology of Hebrews¹⁵⁰. Could it be, then, that we should look to the writings of Philo to uncover our author's incentive to present Jesus as High Priest?

There is certainly no shortage of references in the Philonic literature to the Logos as High Priest. In *De vit. Mos.* II.117-135 and *De fuga et inv.* 109-118, the Mosaic High Priest is seen as an image of the Logos. In *De gig.* 52 and *De fuga et inv.* 108 we find mention of ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ὁ λόγος. *De somn.* I.215 speaks of the world as the temple of the Logos and *Quis rer. div. heres* 205-6 talks of the Logos as mediator between Creator and creation. This latter notion is described in terms of the Logos standing on the border that separates creature from Creator. "This same Word", Philo says, "both pleads with the immortal as suppliant for afflicted mortality and acts as ambassador of the ruler to his subject. He glories in the prerogative and proudly describes it in these words 'and I stood between the Lord and you' (Deut. 5:5), that is neither uncreated as God, nor created as you, but midway between the two extremes, a surety to both sides"¹⁵¹. Various other passages speak of the Word as suppliant (cf., e.g., *De migr. Abr.* 122; *Leg. All.* III 214-5; *De soc. A. et C.* 119). The Logos, then, according to Philo, appears to be High Priest, mediator and intercessor, standing in a special relationship with God. At first sight, this conception seems not far removed from the understanding of Christ to be found in Hebrews. We must ask, however, whether they are in fact so close. For Philo, whatever feature of his "kaleidoscope of imagery"¹⁵² he is focussing on, the Logos represents divine Mind or Reason - that which, in

Williamson's words, could "bridge the gulf between a God of Pure Being and a world of matter"⁵³. The fragment of divine Reason present in man made possible communication between man and God, made possible the entry of the human mind into the world of Ideas. Thus Philo's Logos is not a personal Being but an abstract concept brought into service to solve metaphysical and philosophical problems; in particular, how could the pure rationality of God come into contact with the irrationality of man?

The author of Hebrews does not address himself to this question. Indeed, he insists that the Son who bears the very stamp of God's nature (1:3) "had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest" (2:17). The reality of Jesus' human experience, temptation, suffering and death is fundamental to the argument of the epistle and undergirds its priestly Christology. Even after his exaltation, Jesus is very much a personal being and one, moreover, who has dealt fully and finally with sin, enabling man to approach God with confidence. That approach is based not on rational compatibility but on the forgiveness of sins. It may also be of significance that nowhere in Hebrews is Jesus described explicitly as the Logos⁵⁴.

Such major differences of approach and intention surely suggest that, despite superficial similarity in modes of expression, the writer of Hebrews does not draw his inspiration from Philo when presenting Jesus as High Priest. As Williamson says, "so little, if anything, of the distinctly Philonic conception of the Logos-High Priest appears in Hebrews"⁵⁵. He goes on to argue, "The similarities of language which do undoubtedly exist between Philo and Hebrews serve to show how deeply indebted both were to the O.T.... their application of the O.T. [was] in one case to philosophical truths, in the other case to an historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, believed to be the Messiah"⁵⁶. It might also be important to remember that in connection with Melchizedek, Philo does not mention Psalm 110, a link which is of considerable importance for the author of Hebrews.

2.14 Wisdom

To rule out direct Philonic influence on the Epistle's doctrine of Christ's High Priesthood, however, is not to say that Hebrews was unaffected by the language and speculations of Hellenistic Judaism in a more general sense. There seems little doubt, for example, that Heb. 1:2, 3 reflects aspects of the "vivid personifications"¹⁵⁷ of Wisdom to be found in certain Jewish texts, notably the Wisdom of Solomon ¹⁵⁸. Yet would the 'Wisdom concept' alone have been sufficient to stimulate in our author a priestly interpretation of Christ? There are possible connections. Ecclesiasticus 24 presents Wisdom as supreme mediator and one, moreover, who is associated with worship and service in "the holy tabernacle" (vv. 10 & 15). However, it is clear from v. 23 that in this passage Wisdom is to be identified with the Torah rather than with the High Priest. In Wisd. 9:4, Wisdom is described as sitting beside God's throne (τῇν τῶν οὐρῶν θρόνον παρέδρον σοφίαν) and in 9:10 God is asked to send Wisdom "out of thy holy heavens and from the throne of thy glory". It is just possible that, for the author of Hebrews, such verses provided a link with Ps. 110:1 and so, by consequent association, with v. 4 of that psalm. There is no hint of this in the epistle but even if it were to be the case, it is more likely that the influence of Wisdom is secondary against the primary stimulus of the psalm. Wisdom language is indeed brought by implication into juxtaposition with the priesthood image in Heb. 1:3, but it is hard to find any convincing evidence that the Jewish notion of Wisdom, even in any already existing Christian guise¹⁵⁹, has provided the original model or starting point for the proclamation of Jesus as High priest.

2.15 Atoning martyrdom

The same could be argued concerning any possible influence of the concept of atoning martyrdom. Buchanan maintains that Jesus, in his priestly atoning offering, is presented in Hebrews as "a true martyr, whose sins had been cleansed, leaving him sinless, holy, undefiled. perfect and sanctified"¹⁶⁰. It is clear from certain passages in 2 and 4 Maccabees (notably 2 Macc. 7:33, 37, 38 and 4 Macc. 6:28-29; 17:21-22) that the blood of those faithful to death was believed to have saving efficacy for God's sinful people. So Eleazar prays

just before he dies, "Be merciful to thy people, and be satisfied with the punishment of me on their account. Let my blood be a purification for them and take my life in recompense (ἀντίψυχον) for theirs" (4 Macc. 6:28-29). It is also clear that the Maccabean literature has had some influence on Hebrews. Heb. 11:35, for instance, can readily be seen as a reference to the Maccabean martyrs and Heb. 12:1f. could well contain a definite echo of 4 Macc. 17:9f. where "an aged priest, a woman and seven sons" are described as "εἰς Θεὸν ἀφορῶντες, καὶ μέχρι θανάτου τὰς βρομίας ὑπομειναντῆς". Yet it is not clear that the author of Hebrews has taken over with his citation of stirring exemplars of faith the concept of *atoning* martyrdom.

There is no suggestion in chap. 11 that the writer thinks of the "witnesses" he brings to our attention as having an atoning role, still less that their activities foreshadowed the high-priestly and sin-erasing self-offering of Christ⁶¹. They are, rather, powerful examples of persevering faith. Neither does there seem to be any obvious indication that our Epistle seeks to present the efficacy of Jesus' death in terms of the persuasive merits of a righteous martyr. 12:3 is perhaps the closest Hebrews comes to such an interpretation and here, again, Christ's enduring of hostility from sinners is put forward as an encouragement and incentive to ὑπομονή, not as a way of understanding how the Lord's suffering can bring about atonement. That subject has already been dealt with - and dealt with in terms of the fulfilment of the Old Covenant provision for sacrifice, focussed in the ritual for the Day of Atonement.

Further, the Maccabean literature presents the death of the faithful as propitiatory of God's wrath against his sinful people (cf. 4 Macc. 28, 29 cited above)⁶². It is difficult to find in Hebrews evidence of such an approach to the death of Christ, particularly if one understands ἱλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ in 2:17 as "expiate" rather than "make propitiation for" the sins of the people⁶³. The consistent emphasis of our Epistle seems to be on deep-seated cleansing carried out by God in his Son. We do not find a picture of Jesus appeasing God's anger by his righteous death.

In any case, as regards the author of Hebrews, the leap has to be made from Christ's sacrifice, however it is interpreted, to Christ's high-priesthood "after the order of Melchizedek". Would a background of ideas concerning atoning martyrdom have been sufficient to precipitate such a leap? The Eleazar of 4 Maccabees was a priest but he was neither ἄρχιερεὺς nor κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ and he receives no specific place in our Epistle. The Hasmonean rulers seem to have placed themselves in the Melchizedekian order but they are not among the ranks of those described in the literature as dying an atoning death. It would appear that we need to look elsewhere for the primary impetus behind Hebrews' presentation of Jesus as the great High Priest who by his willing self-offering made complete and final purification for sin.

2.16 The sacrifice of Isaac

Could the sacrifice of Isaac provide a more satisfactory model, particularly in view of that version of the tradition which stressed the willing and mysterious role of Isaac himself?

There is a growing interest amongst scholars as to how far contemporary ideas concerning the Akedah, the Binding of Isaac, have influenced the Christology and soteriology of the NT¹⁶⁴. G. Vermes, for instance, asserts, "That the Pauline doctrine of redemption is basically a Christian version of the Akedah calls for little demonstration"¹⁶⁵. He also sees clear evidence of the influence of the Akedah, "bound, as in Judaism, to the Servant motif", in the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic writings¹⁶⁶. R. Daly goes so far as to say that the Binding of Isaac "supplies the single most important piece of background for the sacrificial soteriology of the New Testament"¹⁶⁷. P.R. Davies, on the other hand, considers that "A critical interpretation of the evidence seems to me to demand the conclusion that the Jewish Aqedah is in fact a response to Christian proclamation"¹⁶⁸.

Certainly from the second century AD there is definite evidence in Christian literature that the offering of Isaac was seen as a type of the

Passion of Christ. The Epistle of Barnabas perhaps provides the earliest example. Here the author argues that "Our Lord... was Himself going to offer the vessel of the spirit as a sacrifice for our sins, for the fulfilment of the type established in Isaac who was offered upon the altar"¹⁶⁹. Reference to such typology can be found in various other patristic writers, including Irenaeus and Tertullian¹⁷⁰. We find also in Jewish literature of the early Christian era an interpretation of Genesis 22 that goes beyond the biblical account in underlining Isaac's voluntary co-operation and the lasting redemptive value of his offering. So 4 Maccabees, the Palestinian Targum, Josephus and Pseudo-Philo all mention Isaac's willingness, as indeed does Philo himself¹⁷¹. With the exception of Philo, these writings also suggest that Isaac's obedient self-offering was regarded as so meritorious in the eyes of God that it could be effectively pleaded on behalf of Isaac's descendants. Vermes notes further, "Rabbinic writings show clearly that sacrifices, and perhaps the offering of all sacrifice were intended as a memorial of Isaac's self-oblation. Their only purpose was to remind God of the merit of him who bound himself upon the altar"¹⁷².

Have such views, then, had a formative effect on the theology of the author of Hebrews? There is undoubtedly in the Epistle a marked stress on the willingness of Jesus to offer himself (cf., e.g., Heb. 7:27; 9:14, 25-26; 10:5-10) and on the full and final efficacy of his offering (cf., e.g., 9:12, 26; 10:10, 12, 18). Could this emphasis (which is closely connected with the author's High Priestly Christology) be traced back to Jewish ideas concerning Isaac and his "binding"? R.N. Longenecker, for one, would certainly want to admit the possibility that the Akedah motif "underlies the repeated emphasis in the Letter to the Hebrews that as High Priest, of whom it is required that something be in hand to be offered, Jesus offered up himself"¹⁷³. It seems an attractive possibility - but is it borne out by what we actually find in the text of the Epistle?

It must be said at once that there is no *explicit* reference in Hebrews to the kind of expositions found in the Jewish literature mentioned above. Where there is reference to Genesis 22 (11:17-19), only the biblical account is made use of, and that, like our Epistle, stresses Abraham's faith and obedience. Of

Isaac's attitude, as F.F. Bruce points out, "our author says nothing"¹⁷⁴. In 11:20 Isaac is mentioned as an example of faith, but the substance of his example is *not* that he offered himself upon the altar but that he "invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau". Only here is Isaac the focus of attention. At 11:9 and 17-19, where Isaac is also named, he serves to underline what is being said about Abraham. Neither is there any obvious trace of the kind of 'Isaac typology' found in later Christian writers. In view of our author's evident concern for "types and shadows", it seems unlikely that if he were working from ideas regarding the redemptive self-offering of Isaac he would have failed to have argued the point more clearly and openly. He has no such reticence in relation to Melchizedek as the type of Christ's high priesthood. Abraham, too, receives considerable attention. He is a lesser figure than Melchizedek (chap. 7) but he is great in faith and patience (6:13-15; 11:8-19). At 6:14 there is a direct quotation from Genesis 22:17, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you", the re-iteration of a promise apparently put in jeopardy by God's command that Isaac should be sacrificed. Again the author of Hebrews follows the biblical account by stressing *Abraham's* faithfulness: "Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise" (6:15). No mention is made of the merits of Isaac.

The Akedah tradition makes much of Isaac's unprotesting, even eager, willingness to submit to sacrificial death. One wonders how readily Heb. 5:7 can be harmonised with such a notion: "In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death and he was heard for his (godly?) fear (εὐλαβείας)". There is indeed a significant emphasis in Hebrews on the reality of Christ's human experience and temptations, on his learning of obedience, an emphasis which may well have come from tradition concerning "the historical Jesus". Whatever view we may take on this latter, when we search for potential interpretative models for the "testing" of Jesus there are perhaps stronger candidates than the Isaac of the Akedah - Abraham or Adam, for instance¹⁷⁵. The willingness of Christ to be obedient to God, to experience "the suffering of death" (2:9) was tested in the fire of that "fear of death" which is part of the human condition Christ came to share and redeem (2:10-18)¹⁷⁶.

We may note that little is made in Hebrews of the Passover ritual, something which Vermes and others see as very closely tied to the Akedah tradition¹⁷⁷. Passover is alluded to at 3:16 ("Was it not all those who left Egypt under the leadership of Moses?") and referred to directly at 11:28 ("By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the first-born might not touch them."). In neither of these cases is any apparent connection made with the Binding of Isaac. Both references make good sense in terms of the biblical account of Exodus. What of 2:14-16? Here it is claimed that Christ, through death, destroyed him who had the power of death, thus delivering those subject to life-long slavery. Is Christ at this point being thought of as the Passover Lamb? If so, is it significant that in the following verse (16) he is said to take hold of the "seed of Abraham" (Isaac)? There are difficulties in this interpretation. Hebrews quite clearly identifies τὸν τὸ κράτος ἔχοντα τοῦ Θανάτου with τὸν διάβολον (contrast 11:28, where the destroying angel of the Exodus is *not* equated with the devil). Was such an identification current with regard to the Passover 'angel of death'? And was that angel's *destruction* thought to be part of the function of the sacrificial lambs? There seems to be little indication that this was the case¹⁷⁸. If we look beyond Passover to the sacrifice of Isaac, we find in the account of the incident given in Jubilees (which links the Akedah with the Passover festival)¹⁷⁹ that Mastema, the prince of evil, persuaded God to test Abraham (Jub. 17:16). There is, however, no suggestion that Mastema is destroyed by Isaac's offering. He is rather "put to shame" by Abraham's faithfulness (Jub. 18:12).

We have to reckon also with the statement in Heb. 2:15 that those who were *enslaved* were in that condition because of their "fear of death", a factor which does not figure prominently in the Passover story or in the Akedah tradition. Perhaps, as we shall argue below¹⁸⁰, it would be more apposite to see 2:14, 15 in terms of 'Adam imagery' linked with ideas found in Wisdom literature (cf. especially Wisd. 1:13f.; 2:23f.). With regard to the σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ of 2:16, it is important to notice the absence in the Greek text of the definite article. Our author does not have in mind a particular individual (or race), but rather "those who are children of faith"¹⁸¹, those who are "imitators of the ones who through faith and patience

inherit the promises" (Heb. 6:12), of whom Abraham is set forward as the prime example. It is of such σπέρμα that Jesus "takes hold" (ἐπιλαμβάνεται). Whatever the precise meaning of this verb¹⁸², it seems unlikely that it was intended to suggest that Jesus became a second Isaac. The burden of the author's message here is the reality of Christ's humanity. Hence the consequential character of 2:17, 18: "Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect".

At 9:28, Christ's offering is described in terms highly reminiscent of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 ("εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας cf. Is. 53:12 LXX). At 9:26, Christ is said to have appeared "once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself". Could this juxtaposition of ideas reflect the association that seems to have been made in the Akedah tradition between Servant, Passover Lamb, and Isaac's self-offering?¹⁸³ It has to be said that the immediate context and point of reference for 9:26-28, with the Servant allusion, is not so much Passover as Day of Atonement ritual (cf. vv.24, 25). It is this latter, indeed, which has a much more obviously dominant influence on the author's overall argument concerning the atoning sacrifice of Christ. It is this ritual which provides for our author a fertile link between Christ as Suffering Servant and Christ as High Priest. There is no 'strong encouragement' in the text to make us feel that Isaac's sacrifice lies behind either or both models. In fact, when we look at any Jewish material which could be regarded as reasonably contemporary, there is no sign of Isaac's being described as a priest.

The Christ of Hebrews, like the Isaac of the Akedah, voluntarily and redemptively offers himself. Yet when our author seeks scriptural illustration of this he turns not to Genesis 22 but to Psalm 40, set in the context of the establishment of that new covenant envisaged in Jer. 31 (cf. Heb. 10:1-18). Through the willing atonement offering of his Son, God is able to put into operation the new covenant, whereby sacrifices and offerings are no longer required and he will remember their sins and misdeeds no more. The point of comparison here is not Isaac's offering but those sacrificial provisions made by God in the Mosaic covenant. It remains to ask whether the stress in Hebrews on Jesus as "one who is son", the Son of God, could bear any reference

to Isaac. We may note first the absence of any adjectival qualifications such as ἱδὸς, μονογενῆς or ἀγαπητός (cf. LXX Gen 22:2, 12, 16), which we might have expected had an allusion to the Isaac figure been in mind (cf., e.g., John 3:16; Rom. 8:32, seen by some scholars as Christian versions of the Akedah¹⁸⁴). We notice next that the description of Christ as Son nowhere appears in close conjunction with those places where Isaac and Abraham are specifically mentioned. The nearest occasion (referring to Abraham) is at 7:3 and here it is *Melchizedek* who is the centre of attention. There is no clear reason, then, why the identification of Jesus as Son should be linked with an Isaac model, especially as the filial description is not evidently anchored to the specific proclamations concerning Christ's self-offering (i.e. 9:12-14, 26; 10:10-14; all these passages use the term Christ; at 7:27 the reference is to Jesus the high priest. The mention of 'Son' in v. 28 is in connection with his appointment as high priest, which was by "the word of the oath which came later than the law"). As we shall argue below¹⁸⁵, Jesus as Son perhaps has other associations than the tradition of the Binding of Isaac.

When we take all the above factors into consideration, it seems unlikely that the Akedah provided the major source for our author's understanding of Jesus as great high priest.

2.17 Sitz im Leben of the Epistle

It would be surprising if a piece of writing such as our Epistle were not in some way influenced by the character and situation of the community to which it was addressed. The author is clearly fired by urgent pastoral concern. In the strongest of terms he sets before the community the perils of apostasy and the need to hold fast the Christian confession. He exhorts them also to draw near to God through Christ. In his doctrinal expositions he argues the theological case for such confident and single-minded Christianity. His considerable intellectual acumen would appear to be very much at the service of his rôle as pastor and proclaimer of the word¹⁸⁶. This being the case, we would have expected him to have tried to make use of the experience of his readers in the way he expressed his argument, so as to carry more

conviction. The problem is, however, what precisely was the point of contact and what limit was there, if any, to the familiarity of our author's teaching?

It is notoriously difficult to identify with any certainty the detailed '*Sitz im Leben*' of Hebrews. Suggestions have been many and various. The majority, perhaps, would see the recipients as Jewish Christians in danger of slipping back into some form of their ancestral faith, though some significant scholarship would see them as Gentiles tempted to lapse into irreligion and atheism¹⁸⁷. Within these broad categories, are there any particular possibilities which may have encouraged the author of Hebrews to write in terms of Christ's priesthood? If we agree with Westcott and others¹⁸⁸ that the readers were feeling the strong pull of their orthodox Judaism, then we might feel that this had a bearing on the writer's presentation of Christ as the fulfilment and abrogation of the old covenant. We would also have to reckon in this case with the comparative lack in Hebrews of any sustained consideration of "the Law" in its wider Jewish sense, assuming, perhaps, that it was the ritual side of things after which the community hankered. Could it be, then, that they were converted priests? For such a group, the argument that Christ is the great High Priest* who has made the perfect and final sacrifice might have special relevance. We learn from Acts 6:7 that "a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith". It would be interesting indeed to know what happened to these 'specialised' converts. M.E. Clarkson suggests¹⁸⁹ that after escaping from persecution in Jerusalem, they made their way to Ephesus where they linked up with the disciples of John the Baptist (possibly because some of the priests were acquainted with the priestly family of Zachariah, John's father). Clarkson accepts that "Evidence for the presence of these men in Ephesus is only inferential", but she goes on to say that "if they were there during Apollos' visit, a link would be provided between the suggested source of the idea [Christ's priesthood] and the most plausible guess, hitherto, regarding authorship"¹⁹⁰. She points out, too, that the other early Christian literature (NT and sub-apostolic) which at least hints at the priesthood of Christ is also closely associated with Asia Minor¹⁹¹.

C. Spicq would take a somewhat similar view, though latterly he would want to inject the group of sacerdotal converts with a number of former Essene

priests'⁹². Some recent scholars, indeed, would seek to identify the Epistle's recipients more exclusively with ex-members of the Qumran community'⁹³, or with former adherents of some kind of 'nonconformist' Judaism'⁹⁴. This, they feel, might help to explain Hebrews' method of exegesis, as well as its treatment of angels and the Melchizedekian priesthood of Christ. However, in our examination of the potential source-models for the notion of Christ's messianic priesthood available to our author, both from 'orthodox' and 'sectarian' Judaism, we have found that none has been entirely satisfactory in terms of the Epistle's overall argument. This indicates, perhaps, that even if the writer were taking into account something from his readers' background, it was not the dominating influence on his thought. In fact, it could be that his own experience and background may have had greater significance'⁹⁵.

We must ask, though, whether in using the priesthood of Christ our author could have been using a *Christian* concept already known to the community he addressed. We shall be investigating this question in some detail in the next chapter. Suffice it to say here that if this community did "confess" Jesus as great high priest, it is surprising that there is so little trace in the rest of the N.T. documents of a specifically sacerdotal interpretation of Christ's person and mission. It is surprising, too, that if our author was dealing with familiar doctrine, he should have found it necessary to write 5:11-6:3, a passage which gives the distinct impression that he wanted the community to move on to a 'new' and perhaps more difficult teaching.

Chapter 3

Whence priesthood? A survey of possible sources

2. Contemporary Christian ideas

3.1 Introductory

R. Williamson maintains that our Epistle "stands in a kind of splendid isolation from the language and thought of the rest of the N.T. documents"¹. He goes on to describe the Epistle as "a highly original piece of doctrinal thinking"². Williamson is not 'isolated' in his view. A.B. Bruce, for example, writing much earlier had argued, "Be it treatise, sermon or epistle, this writing is no mere collection of theological commonplaces. The writer is not repeating but *creating* theology"³. T.H. Robinson, too, is convinced that the Epistle "is hardly in accord with the general trend of Christian thought".⁴ Guthrie, however, speaks for another approach when he asserts "the remarkable affinity of this Epistle with all phases of early Christian development".⁵ Such affinity, according to Cullmann, applies specifically to the writer's use of High Priestly Christology, a use "which corresponds to the total witness of early Christian thought"⁶. As we shall see, other scholars would want to link the priesthood category more closely with particular elements in the Christian tradition. What shall we say, then? Does Hebrews' High Priestly Christology stand in splendid isolation? Or is it at home somewhere in the mainstream of Christian thinking?

Hebrews is, of course, the only New Testament writing to describe Christ explicitly as a priest. Are there, however, images and modes of expression elsewhere in the tradition which might have lent encouragement to the drawing out and development of this notion?

3.2 Book of Revelation

We shall begin our investigation with the Book of Revelation, where we find an interesting picture in the first chapter. Here in v.12ff., the seer turns to look at the one who speaks to him. He sees a vision of the heavenly Christ, "one like a son of man", a glorious and resplendent figure whose features seem to owe much to the Danielic Son of man and Ancient of Days⁷ as well as to the four living creatures and the voice of God's glory returning to the Temple described in Ezekiel.⁸ Perhaps there may also be an allusion to the Jewish notion of the surpassing glory of Adam before the Fall.⁹ This awe-inspiring Being is, further, "clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle round his breast" (v. 13). Such was the vesture of the Jewish High Priest (cf. Ex. 28:4). Do we have here, then, a visionary portrayal of a Christ with at least close 'divine associations' who is also a heavenly High Priest, glorious in his glorified humanity? That kind of portrayal would certainly have points of contact with Hebrews, where Christ is not only the ἀπαύκωμα of God's glory but also exalted High Priest, with sinless human experience, who lives for ever. The Christ of Revelation 1 speaks with a voice like the voice of God. The Christ of Hebrews is the Son in whom God manifests his glory and speaks his final word. The Christ of Revelation 1 is 'one like a son of man', a priestly figure endued with celestial radiance who is alive for evermore. The Christ of Hebrews is he, who having been made a little lower than the angels is crowned with glory and honour and exercises a heavenly and eternal priesthood. The pictures are by no means identical. Hebrews draws on different background material - Psalm 8 rather than Daniel 7 for the son of man image, for example, and Wisdom tradition rather than Ezekiel for the divine glory; moreover the author's extensive use of the priesthood category bears no comparison with its brief and allusive appearance in Revelation. Nevertheless, it is interesting that there is, to some extent, a common vision of the exalted, not to say divine, figure, whose features include manhood and priesthood.

In Revelation, moreover, we also encounter the notion of Christ as sacrificial victim - "the Lamb standing as though it had been slain", introduced to us in 5:6ff., who by his blood did "ransom men for God" (v. 9). It is the

blood of the Lamb which, according to a number of references, saves and cleanses (1:5; 7:14; 12:11). Again, there is no exact parallel with Hebrews. The Epistle devotes far *more* attention to the significance of Christ's redemptive activity and does so primarily in terms of the Day of Atonement ritual, though the idea of Jesus as Lamb may well be implied (cf. 9:28a, the 'Servant' image, and 10:6, 8, which seem to cover the whole range of sacrificial activity). Of crucial importance in Hebrews is the conviction that our great High Priest voluntarily offered himself "to deal with sin". We do not find such a powerful and specific inter-weaving of these ideas in Revelation, though the potential for it may well be there.

Furthermore, in the Apocalypse we cannot avoid the concept of a continuously ongoing heavenly worship. It is at the forefront of the whole book. In Hebrews it is more of a backcloth but nonetheless a significant element in the author's understanding of the people of God moving on to a heavenly Jerusalem (12:22) to which, paradoxically, they already have access. That access is made possible with "boldness" because Jesus, the great High Priest, has entered into the inner shrine of the heavenly Temple, to appear in the presence of God on their behalf (cf. 9:24). Through Jesus, God can be directly approached in the innermost sanctuary (cf. 10:19ff.). In Revelation, too, there is a celestial Temple (cf., e.g., 7:15; 11:19; 14:17; 15:5, 6, 8; 16:1, 17), of which it can be said that the Holy of Holies stands open and visible (11:19). Indeed, the culminating vision of the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven declares that "its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb" (21:22). Citizens of *that* city will enjoy the unrestricted presence of God.

Thus, although Revelation and Hebrews display great differences in style, theological emphasis and method of presentation, they *do* have significant points of contact, particularly in their use of cultic/liturgical imagery and terminology. We may further note in connection with this that the Apocalypse employs the notion that the ransomed people of God (members of the new covenant) have like Israel of old been made "a kingdom of priests" (1:6; 5:10; cf. 20:6), an idea not overtly expressed in Hebrews but perhaps there by implication (cf. e.g. 10:19ff. - entry into sanctuary; sprinkling {including ordination?}°); 3:14; 13:15, 16). Why are there these affinities between two

such diverse writings? Is it simply that both authors have pulled out similar themes from the common stock of early Christian ideas? Or is the link more definite than that? Are they, in fact, both drawing from the same *particular* background or tradition? Could Spicq be right when he contends that the writers of Hebrews and Revelation shared a common heritage in "Asia Minor Christianity", a theological seed-bed which encouraged the growth of christological thinking concerned with priesthood and sacrifice?¹¹ He notes as coming from this matrix not only the Apocalypse and our Epistle but also the Johannine literature and 1 Peter. Indeed, he sees in the Johannine tradition the closest relationship with Hebrews¹², so close as to imply that it was the source of our Epistle's sacerdotal Christology.

3.3 The Fourth Gospel

In the Fourth Gospel, Spicq argues, we discern a clear reflection of a Christ seen in priestly terms. Such a thesis merits careful attention, though we may be wary of Spicq's somewhat large assumption that the fact that the beloved disciple was acquainted with the High Priest (Jn. 18:15) would help to explain the Fourth Gospel's concern to show that Jesus is the fulfilment of the OT priesthood. Where, then, in John's Gospel could it be argued that Jesus is understood as a priest? At 19:23f. we are told that the soldiers who crucified Jesus "took his garments and made four parts, one for each soldier". They also took his tunic. "But the tunic was without seam woven from top to bottom; so they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be'." Could this tunic (χιτών) be an allusion to the high priest's robe? Aaron's robe *is* so described in the LXX of Lev. 16:4 and Josephus (Ant. III.161) speaks of the high priestly χιτών in terms somewhat reminiscent of the Fourth Gospel: "Now this vesture (χιτών) was not composed of two pieces, nor was it sewed together (ῥαπτὸς) upon the shoulders and the sides, but it was one long vestment so woven as to have an aperture for the neck". Spicq suggests that there is a real connection here. R.E. Brown mentions what he terms the popular suggestion that in this way, according to John, in the context of the Crucifixion, "Jesus died not only as a king but as a priest"¹³. Barrett would not accept this, and with Lindars (though from a different starting point) takes as the determining factor John's concern to

underline the fulfilment of Ps. 22:18¹⁴ (cf. 19:24). Lindars, indeed, concludes, "A reference to Jesus as High Priest seems unlikely, as this theme receives no attention by John"¹⁵. Barrett, however, describes the affinity with Josephus as "hardly... insignificant", and after dismissing any direct connection with Philo's interpretation of the priestly $\chi\iota\tau\acute{\omega}\nu$ as a symbol of the Logos uniting all things into a seamless unity (Fug. 110-112), goes on to suggest that for John the robe might be symbolic of "the death of Christ as bringing into one flock the scattered children of God (cf. 11:52)"¹⁶.

John 19:23, then, is at best ambiguous evidence. Are there any other hints in the Gospel that might lend further support to Spicq's thesis? It is to Chapter 17 that we must chiefly turn, but first let us consider several other possibilities. Spicq argues that "Le sacerdoce du Christ sanctifiant les siens, consacré par le Père pour être apte à sa mission et fraissant l'offrande volontaire de sa vie, est déjà insinué par Jn."¹⁷. He cites Jn. 10:36 and 14:31. 10:36 has Jesus describing himself as "him whom the Father has sanctified" ($\eta\gamma\acute{\iota}\omega\sigma\epsilon\nu$). Does this necessarily imply priesthood or the idea of sacrifice? Of itself, $\eta\gamma\acute{\iota}\omega\sigma\epsilon\nu$ simply has the general meaning of 'dedicate to holy use'. As Aaron and his sons were sanctified to be priests (LXX Ex. 28:41), so Jeremiah was sanctified to be a prophet (LXX Jer. 1:5). It seems likely, then, that at this point, as Barrett says, "the whole ministry of Jesus, not his death only, is in mind"¹⁸. As we shall see, the situation may well be different when $\eta\gamma\acute{\iota}\omega\sigma\epsilon\nu$ is used again at 17:17, 19.

14:31 has Jesus going forward to his Passion, doing as the Father has commanded him, not unlike, Spicq suggests, the priestly Christ of Hebrews in his voluntary self-offering carrying out the will of God (cf. Heb. 10:5-10). We might compare Jn. 10:15, 17, 18 where similar ideas seem to be expressed. The good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, of his own volition and in accordance with the Father's commandment - theological assertions which would certainly be endorsed by the author of Hebrews in his understanding of the character and motivation of "the great Shepherd of the sheep" (13:20). Yet the fact remains that, although these passages from the Fourth Gospel could conceivably be interpreted in terms of Christ as a priest, it is by no means clear that John himself was consciously thinking in these terms. The same

would be true of Cullmann's contention that Jesus' exhortation to his disciples to pray in his name (Jn. 14:14; 15:16; 16:23, 24) "shows that Christ continues his high priestly work after his ascension by bringing their prayers before God in heaven"¹⁹.

Of chapter 17, Cullmann asserts, "one can explain the whole prayer only on the basis of the high priestly consciousness of the one who spoke it"²⁰. Although the phrase 'high priestly prayer' does not appear until the sixteenth century²¹, long before then Cyril of Alexandria commented that Jesus appears in this chapter as High priest²². Certainly there are features in John 17 that could be suggestive of such an interpretation. Jesus prays for his own, and for those who come to believe in him through their word. In v. 19 he declares, "ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἐγὼ ἔγραψα ἑμαυτόν". Here ἔγραψα may well have associations of a more specifically priestly consecration, for it is used in conjunction with ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν, 'on their behalf'. Lindars is in no doubt that "The preposition 'hyper' unmistakeably introduces a sacrificial connotation"²³. Christ sanctifies himself in order to make an offering on behalf of those whom the Father has given him. Moreover, it seems clear from the witness of the Gospel as a whole that that offering is none other than his own self. The good Shepherd lays down his life ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων (10:11 cf. vv. 15-18); there is no greater love than that a man lay down his life ὑπὲρ τῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ (15:13); it was indeed expedient, in a way Caiaphas did not understand, that one man should die ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ (11:50, cf. vv. 51ff.) We might compare also 1:29, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world". Whatever combination of O.T. motifs and Christian thinking lay behind this phrase²⁴ it would perhaps seem to imply that John understood the death of Jesus as a comprehensively effective sacrificial offering²⁵. Such would appear to be a significant factor in John's chronological placing and description of the Crucifixion (cf. 19:14, 33-36)²⁶.

Could it be true, then, that as J.L.Houlden suggests, "John, like Hebrews, unites the images of priest and sacrificial victim"²⁷? In commenting on Jn. 17:19, Barrett leaves the door open for such a view: "The language", he says, "is equally appropriate to the preparation of a priest and the preparation of a sacrifice; it is therefore doubly appropriate to Christ"²⁸. Appropriate as it

may be, however, the idea of a priest/victim is not unambiguously spelt out - though it may be important to remember that the unambiguous spelling out of ideas is not one of the Fourth Evangelist's most prominent characteristics.

Spicq cites John's presentation of Christ as the manifestation of God, "the living temple and centre of the cult"²⁹ (cf. Jn. 2:21; 4:21-24) as further evidence of the Evangelist's interest in Christ as Priest. Yet even if we accept that the Gospel portrays Jesus as "the fulfilment of all that the Temple represented" (Barrett, p. 196), this "does not require us", as D. Peterson points out, "to understand his ministry as a sacerdotal one"³⁰. The most we can say is that it *could* have such an implication.

Perhaps it may be helpful at this stage to take into account the more general similarities between Hebrews and the Fourth Gospel. Chapter 17, in fact, provides something of a microcosm. Christ is the Son (cf. Heb. 1:2 and *passim*) who shared the Father's glory before the world began (cf. Heb. 1:2, 3), who was sent by the Father (cf. Heb. 3:1), who accomplishes in willing obedience the work the Father gave him to do (cf. Heb. 10:5-10). Christ desires to share the Father's glory with those whom the Father has given him (cf. Heb. 2:10-13) and he prays for those thus given (cf. Heb. 7:25). John's underlining of the sinlessness of Jesus (8:46; cf. 1 Jn. 3:5, 7) reminds us, *pace* Robinson, Williamson and Buchanan³¹, of a corresponding emphasis in Hebrews (cf. 4:15) and there is a similar stress on the reality both of Christ's divine character and pre-existence (e.g. Jn. 1:1-14; 8:58; 17:5; cf. Heb. 1:1-3) and of his humanity (e.g. Jn. 1:14; 4:6; cf. Heb. 2:17f.; 5:7ff.). In 'The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ'³², A.M. Ramsey makes the pregnant suggestion that in Hebrews there are brought together two great Johannine declarations spoken by Pilate, "Behold your king", "Behold the man". One might further argue that for the writer of the Epistle, this union bears fruit in the notion of priesthood, its genesis assisted by the significance in the Christian tradition of Ps. 110:1 and the Son of Man and/or Adam image. Jesus, having been made like his brethren in every respect, is enthroned at the right hand of God, a priest-king for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

There may also be a connection between the idea of Jesus as 'pioneer' and 'forerunner' in Hebrews and the Jesus of the Johannine discourses who talks of going to prepare a place for his own (Jn. 14:2ff., cf. 17:24. Note also that Jesus speaks of coming again to take them to himself and compare Heb. 9:28). In both Hebrews and John there is the notion that in Christ, Judaism has been brought to its fulfilment and abrogation (Jn. 4:21-26; 7-8; cf. Heb. 10:1-18).

The two writings, then, are far from being poles apart³³. They often have similar things to say about Christ in not dissimilar ways. Yet it has to be admitted that in Hebrews we have a much more definite and explicit picture of Christ as the Priest/Victim.

3.4 The Johannine Epistles

Could the Johannine Epistles provide us with any further connections? The closest parallel is perhaps to be found in 1 Jn. 2:1 & 2: "... if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the expiation (ἐλασμός) for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world". It is interesting that the παράκλητος image, with all its possible connotations³⁴, is here brought into conjunction with the conviction that Christ, the righteous, has dealt with sins, and dealt with them in such a way which, whether interpreted in terms of expiation or propitiation³⁵, surely implies a sacrificial offering of himself (particularly in the light of 1:7 - 'the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin')³⁶. Indeed, A.J.B. Higgins argues that in these verses we have "a transition from intercession or advocacy to priestly intercession and self-sacrifice"³⁷. The forensic figure, or perhaps rather the *intercessory* figure³⁸, is giving way to the sacerdotal and sacrificial, and is possibly not so far removed from the sinless one who made expiation (ἐλίσσασθαι) for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:17) by the offering of himself (Heb. 9:12-14), and who now ever lives to make intercession for them (Heb. 7:25, cf. 9:24).

3.5 1 Peter

When we turn to 1 Peter, we find little indication that the writer understood Christ as a priest. He is, though, presented as sacrificial victim. In 1:19 those addressed are reminded that they were ransomed "with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish" (ἀμώμου cf. Heb. 9:14). As well as Passover imagery here, there may well be an allusion to the Servant of Isaiah 53 (especially when 1 Peter 1:18 is compared with Is. 52:3 and its mentioning of ransoming without silver). In 1 Peter 2:22ff. the identity of Christ with the Suffering Servant becomes explicit with the quotation of Is. 53. We may compare particularly 1 Peter's reference in v. 24 to Christ's bearing of our sins in his body on the tree (alluding to Is. 53:12) with Hebrews' use of the same allusion in 9:28. It has been further suggested (by, e.g. Best and Windisch³⁹) that there may be an echo in the Petrine verse of "teaching similar to that of Heb. 9-10, where Christ unlike the O.T. priests offers himself" (cf. ὅς --- αὐτὸς λυήνευκεν 1 Pet. 2:24). Could there also be at this point a common usage of the Akedah tradition in Judaism? As we have seen, this stressed the atoning efficacy of Isaac's voluntary self-offering, an offering which, it has been claimed, permeated thinking on the significance of both Passover ritual and the figure of the Suffering Servant⁴⁰. If this is also the basic source of the Lamb of God image in the Fourth Gospel and in Revelation⁴¹, then perhaps a new dimension is added to Spicq's common seed-bed thesis. However, we have suggested⁴², in relation to Hebrews at least, that it can be questioned how far ideas surrounding the binding of Isaac have been formative, particularly with regard to the author's notion of the priesthood of Christ.

In 1 Pet. 3:18 the writer states, "For Christ died for sins once for all (ἀπαλλάξ), the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us unto God". Here again we find the assertion that Christ's death was redemptive - and decisively so. It is interesting that 'Peter' uses ἀπαλλάξ, a word theologically characteristic of Hebrews when dealing with the sacrificial work of Christ, and found in that context nowhere else in the New Testament. It is notable, too, that the effect of Christ's death is described in 1 Peter in terms of enabling access to God, an emphasis which is fundamental to the

priestly Christology of Hebrews. Could it also be significant that 1 Pet. 3:22, the conclusion of the unit we are considering, features a reference to Ps. 110:1. possibly in conjunction with an allusion to Ps. 8? Christ is "at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities and powers subject to him" - a claim which the writer of Hebrews could not but endorse (cf. e.g. Heb 1 & 2).

Another major point of contact between the two epistles finds its focus in the concept of the new covenant. 1 Pet. 1:2 talks of being sanctified by the Spirit "to obedience and sprinkling (ῥαντισμὸν) of the blood of Jesus Christ". The O.T. basis of this clearly seems to be the covenant ceremony recorded in Ex. 24:1-11, a ritual cited by Hebrews (9:15-22) as a foreshadowing of the new and better covenant mediated by Jesus. The reference to "sprinkling" (ῥεφαντισμένους) in Heb, 10:22 occurs in a context which strongly suggests a reference to baptism⁴³ and if 1 Peter is indeed to be placed in a baptismal setting,⁴⁴ this might well indicate that both writers drew on the belief that baptism was a sign of entry into the new covenant relationship. However this may be, there is surely a common acceptance that the blood of Jesus is instrumental in bringing about this new relationship.

Moreover, the new covenant people in 1 Peter are described as a holy and royal priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Pet. 2:4-10). While Hebrews makes no explicit mention of the priesthood of believers, there may well be hints that the writer would support such a notion (cf. 3:14; 10:21, with its possible allusion to the ordination rite of Lev. 8:23f., 30, as well as the covenant ceremony) and in any case it is clear that he urges Christians to offer up (ἀναφέρειν) sacrifices of praise and good works "through" Jesus (Heb. 13:15, 16). We may remember, too, that as in 1 Peter 2:5 Christians are being built into a spiritual house (οἶκος πνευματικός), so in Hebrews (10:21), Jesus is the great priest over the οἶκος of God.

In view of all this, Spicq believes that, despite areas where Hebrews and 1 Peter do not obviously correspond, their authors nonetheless breathed the same "spiritual atmosphere"⁴⁵.

3.6 Ephesians

Spicq does not include Ephesians in his list of N.T. documents affected by the Asia Minor "atmosphere" but it may well be worth considering that epistle at this point, particularly as it does seem to have interesting affinities with 1 Peter⁴⁶. When comparing it with Hebrews we find that there is some connection of language and thought. In Ephes. 2:11-22, for example, it is declared that those in Christ Jesus have been brought near in the blood of Christ (cf. Heb. 10:19-22). The death of Christ on the Cross has broken down the "middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile and through Christ both have access (προσάγωγη) to the Father. (cf. Heb. 4:16; 10:19). Christians are "fellow-citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (cf. Heb. 12:1 & 22f.; 13:14; 3:6; 10:21). They are "a holy temple in the Lord", "a dwelling-place of God" (cf. Heb. 3:6). The words and phrases used are by no means identical but the thought expressed is not so very different - access to God through the blood of Christ, proclaimed in terms influenced by the imagery of the Jewish Temple⁴⁷. In Eph. 3:12, the writer uses παρρησία, a word favoured by Hebrews to describe the believer's approach to God (Heb. 4:16; 10:19; cf. 3:6; 10:35). The context in Eph. is similar. In Christ Jesus we have "boldness (παρρησίαν) and access in confidence" (cf. 2 Cor. 3:12; 1 Jn. 3:21; 4:17; 5:14). Eph. 5:2 sees Christ's death as a sacrificial self-offering: "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering (προσφορὰν) and sacrifice (θυσίαν) to God" (cf. Eph. 5:25).

3.7 A common fund of ideas?

Thus, on the basis of the New Testament material we have so far examined, it might indeed be argued that there is a common fund of ideas which *could* have some connection with the notion of priesthood. We may summarize and list those ideas as follows:-

- 1) The interpretation of Christ's death as sacrificial and redemptive.
- 2) The belief that Christ voluntarily offered himself on our behalf.
- 3) The conviction that through Christ we have confident access to God.

- 4) The belief that Christ makes intercession for his followers.
- 5) The idea of Christ or the Church as the new Temple - and, in Revelation, at least, the notion of a temple in heaven.

Are such factors sufficient to make us accept Spicq's argument that the author of Hebrews must have lived for long years and exercised his ministry in Asia and that it was in this milieu that he came to his doctrine of the priesthood of Christ?⁴⁸ Were we to accept this supposition, we should still have to ask *why* the writer focussed on a specifically *priestly* Christology for, despite all the potential of the material considered above, *nowhere* there is Christ called a priest, let alone a priest after the order of Melchizedek⁴⁹.

But are the factors listed above confined to the literature so far discussed? We shall ask this of them in reverse order.

3.8 The New Temple

The idea of the people of God as his Temple can certainly be found elsewhere, particularly in the Corinthian correspondence, cf. 1 Cor. 3:16f.; 6:19 (your body a temple of the Holy Spirit); 2 Cor. 6:16 (note the quotation of 2 Sam. 7:14 applied to believers in v. 18). We may note, too, the assertions in Acts 7:48-50 and 17:24 that "the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands" and compare Heb. 9:11 & 24. The Acts 7 reference occurs within the context of Stephen's speech which, as Wm. Manson has shown, displays a number of affinities with Hebrews⁵⁰. Mk. 14:58 and 15:29 perhaps suggest a tradition similar to that found in Jn.2:19ff. (i.e. the body of Jesus as a temple) and Mk. 15:38 and parallels (the rending of the Temple *κατεπέτασεν* at the Crucifixion) provide an interesting comparison with Heb. 10:19-21, where Jesus the High Priest opens a new and living way for us through the curtain (*καταπέτασμα*), that is, his flesh. Could our author have been reflecting on the Synoptic tradition? And could Matt. 12:6 also be of relevance? Here Jesus is recorded as saying to the Pharisees, "I tell you, something greater than the Temple is here" ?

3.9 Christ as Intercessor

Turning to Romans 8:34, we encounter again the interceding Christ. The picture here is indeed close to that in Hebrews, for the exalted Son intercedes for us (ἐν τὴν ἄλυσιν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν cf. Heb. 7:25) at the right hand of God (cf. the use of Ps. 110:1 in Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1)⁵¹. We may, perhaps, also consider in this connection Stephen's vision at his martyrdom, when he sees the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56), though it should be remembered that the heavenly High Priest of Hebrews is seated at God's right hand and is only briefly described, if at all, in terms of the titular 'Son of Man'⁵². Luke's Gospel provides us with a presentation of the Son of man as heavenly confessor (Lk. 12:8, cf. Matt. 10:32, 33), as well as recording instances of Jesus as intercessor during his earthly ministry (Lk. 22:31, 32; 23:34). Higgins, in fact, sees the "ultimate source" of priestly Christology as lying "in the teaching of Jesus himself about the Son of Man as the intercessor or advocate on behalf of those who had confessed Jesus on earth"⁵³. This teaching, influenced by speculations set in motion by the belief in the exaltation of Jesus as the Son of man to the heavenly world", came to be interpreted by the Church in priestly terms. Ps. 110:4 was therefore an added encouragement rather than a basic stimulus to the concept of Christ as priest⁵⁴. This concept, argues Higgins, though elaborated in a unique way by the author of Hebrews, was not created by him⁵⁵. We may ask again, if this is the case, why Hebrews is the only N.T. document explicitly to describe Christ as a priest. We may also ask why Ps. 110:4 was so significant for the writer.

3.10 Confident access to God through Christ

Rom. 5:2 provides us with a good example of this conviction. Through Christ "we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God". It may be argued that the meaning of προσαγωγῇ here is primarily cultic, implying entry into the sanctuary of God's presence⁵⁶; cf. Heb 4:14-16, where believers are urged to draw near with confidence to the throne of grace because they have a high priest, Jesus, the

Son of God. We may note, too, that according to Hebrews a major motivating force behind God's action in Christ was his will to bring many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10).

3.11 Christ's voluntary self-offering

Cullmann maintains that Jesus' use of Ps. 110:1 (Mk. 12:35ff.; 14:62 and parallels) implies his application to himself of v. 4, suggesting that "Jesus considered it his task to fulfil the priestly office". At his trial before the Sanhedrin, Jesus "tells the earthly high priest that his priesthood is not earthly" and claims that "he is true heavenly Son of Man and the heavenly High Priest"⁵⁷. It is doubtful, however, whether the text will bear an inference of such large proportions, particularly as there is little evidence elsewhere in the Synoptics supportive of a 'priestly consciousness' in Jesus⁵⁸. Apart from his prayer for others and the enigmatic statement about the confessional role of the heavenly Son of Man, the nearest we get to such an idea is, perhaps, Mark 10:45: "the Son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" - and exegesis of this verse is, of course, somewhat controversial. If $\lambdaύτρον$ $\lambdaύει$ $\piολλῶν$ is taken to be influenced by Isaiah 53⁵⁹, then it could be that Jesus is talking here in terms of giving himself as a sin-offering (or, if preferred, that a tradition in the early church is so describing it⁶⁰). This *could* be seen as having priestly associations. However, other interpretations, and these largely based on precedent usage of $\lambdaύτρον$, do not appear quite so relevant to our theme. There is nothing specifically sacerdotal about an expression of costly commitment to those being served⁶¹ or an action to redeem those who are in some way enslaved⁶². It is perhaps important, though, to take into account the phrase $\deltaοῦναι$ $τῇν$ $ψυχὴν$ $αὐτοῦ$. In Judaism, such a phrase would have connotations of a martyr's atoning death (cf. 1 Macc. 2:50; 6:44). Thus Mk. 10:45 does contain the idea of a voluntary self-offering which will have redemptive consequences for many, however the form of that redemption is to be understood.

Galatians 1:4 and 2:20 also give expression to the voluntary character of Christ's giving of himself. He "gave himself (δόντος ἑαυτὸν) for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (1:4) - sentiments not wholly foreign to the writer of Hebrews (cf. Heb. 9:26; 10:9, 10). Gal. 2:20 refers to "the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (παρὰδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ)". In other places, Paul has God doing the 'giving up' or 'handing over'. So, explicitly in Romans 8:32 ("He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all") and by implication in Rom. 4:25 ("who was delivered for our offences..."). In Hebrews, similarly, there is dual stress on the initiative of God and the willing co-operation of the Son.

3.12 Christ's death as sacrificial and redemptive

In several places there are indications that the death of Christ was regarded as sacrificial. 1 Cor. 5:7f. links his death with Passover. 1 Tim. 2:5-6 talks of Christ as the mediator (μεσίτης) between God and men, "who gave himself as a ransom for all (ὁ δούς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων)". In whatever sense μεσίτης should be taken here⁶³, it is certainly not the same usage as in Hebrews, where Jesus is not an *intermediary* but the *mediator* of a new covenant (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). Neither is the ransom image to be found in Hebrews, but the *idea* of Christ's beneficial self-offering which accompanies it in 1 Tim. is clearly in line with the thinking of our author. Romans 3:25 perhaps provides us with the closest parallel to the sacrificial theology of Hebrews, particularly if one accepts that the Day of Atonement ritual lay behind Paul's thinking here and that ἱλαστήριον is to be understood as 'mercy-seat'⁶⁴. Even if one is not willing to be so 'concrete', it seems clear that, according to Paul, God has set forward or purposed a fully effective means of atonement in the blood of Christ (surely to be interpreted sacrificially). In Calvin's words, Paul "informs us that in Christ there was exhibited in reality that which was given figuratively to the Jews"⁶⁵. The fact that God is subject of the phrase does seem to favour the thought of expiation rather than propitiation⁶⁶ and this, too, would be in keeping with the approach found in Hebrews (cf. 2:17). There

is little hint, however, that in Rom. 3:25 Christ is conceived of as priest as well as victim. Indeed, as J.L. Houlden suggests, "it may be that the image (of priesthood) is (here) applied momentarily to God himself"⁶⁷. If so, it might be considered alongside L.S. Thornton's contention that in Hebrews, "The priesthood of Christ is the priesthood of God incarnate"⁶⁸.

3.13 Summary

It would seem, then, that there are scattered *throughout* the New Testament ways of describing Christ and his work which could have potential for being developed in terms of priesthood. There are also instances where Paul talks of his own ministry in sacerdotal language (Romans 15:15ff.)⁶⁹ and of himself as a sacrifice (Phil. 2:7; cf. 2 Tim. 4:6). Phil. 4:18 describes the gifts Paul received as "a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing (εὐχάριστος) to God" (cf. Heb. 13:16) and Romans 12:1 urges the brethren to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing (εὐχάριστος) to God, which is their reasonable worship (cf. Heb. 12:28b).

Having considered all this, however, it remains the case that no N.T. document other than Hebrews sets forth Christ explicitly as a priest - and a non-levitical High Priest at that - who voluntarily offers himself in accordance with God's will to deal with sin comprehensively and finally.

D. Peterson argues, however, that "If our writer was the first Christian explicitly to describe Christ in these terms it must be remembered that there are several elements in other Christologies known to us from the New Testament that could have given rise to this particular presentation of the person and work of Christ"⁷⁰. Peterson cites the idea of Jesus as heavenly intercessor (which we have discussed above), as Servant, as Son of Man and as new Adam (which he sees as the most likely candidate). In addition to these possibilities, we shall now look briefly at the potential claims of a 'Son of God' Christology, together with ideas surrounding Christian usage of Psalm 110 and the new covenant prophesied in Jeremiah 31. We shall ask whether any of these, all traceable in Hebrews to a greater or lesser extent, could indeed have given rise to the sacerdotal interpretation of Christ in our Epistle.

3.14 Servant

Though scholars differ as to precisely where its influence is to be discerned, there seems little doubt that the Servant figure of Deutero-Isaiah, and more particularly the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, was of some importance in the early Church's understanding of Jesus⁷¹. Has it left its mark on Hebrews? Could J. R Schaefer be right in his suggestion that the idea of Jesus as Servant may provide one "of several converging elements that bring our author to see Jesus' death as a priestly act"⁷² We must enquire first whether there is any reference in the Epistle, in a Christological context, to the Isaianic Servant figure.

Nowhere do we find a direct quotation from any of the Servant passages. There is, however, at 9:28 a fairly close allusion to Is. 53:12 (LXX) (πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας Heb. 9:28 cf. ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκε Is. 53:12). Does this isolated instance imply that, for our author, the influence of Servant Christology was but incidental, part of the Christian tradition he had absorbed but not of formative significance? Some would have it so. Montefiore, for example, describes 9:28 as a "passing allusion"⁷³ to Isaiah 53, whilst Moffatt uses the term "echo"⁷⁴. Vincent Taylor is definitely dismissive: "While the language of ix.28," he maintains, "reflects the influence of Isaiah liii.12, it cannot be said that the Servant-conception enters into the writer's account of the work of Christ"⁷⁵. Others would not be so negative in their assessment. A. Richardson sees the whole section from v. 11 to v. 28 of Hebrews 9 as a powerful restatement of the Servant theme "in terms of the peculiar ascension-atonement conception of Auct. Heb."⁷⁶. Peterson, in asserting "the likelihood that our writer was influenced in his presentation of Christ by the Isaianic Servant theme"⁷⁷, argues that this influence is to be found at Heb. 5:7-8 and 7:27 as well as at 9:28⁷⁸. Buchanan would concur with regard to Heb. 5:7-9, relating these verses to an existing Christian confession "which associated Jesus with the suffering servant of II Isaiah"⁷⁹. In support of this association, he cites not only Is. 53:3, 6, 10 and 12 but also Is. 45:17, where Israel is saved by the Lord with σωτηρίαν αἰώνιον (cf. Heb. 5:9). If we were to follow A. Snell, we should have to add to our

list of 'Servant-influenced' verses Heb. 7:25 (the intercession of the Servant) and 2:13 (which Snell connects with Is. 53:10 LXX as well as Is. 8:18)⁸⁰.

L.S. Thornton finds in Heb. 2 as a whole a "fusion of two images, namely Adam and the Servant of the Lord"⁸¹, the latter image coming through in terms of vocation (redemptive suffering) and pattern of experience (glory - humiliation/death - glory). F.F. Bruce would also see a significant link between the voluntary self-offering of Christ proclaimed in Hebrews and "the portrayal of the Suffering Servant who makes himself an offering for sin"⁸². That link is not unconnected with priesthood. "The Servant... accepts death for the transgression of his people, filling the two-fold role of priest and victim, as Christ does in the epistle"⁸³. Cullmann propounds a similar view: "We see that the concept of High Priest is not far removed from that of the 'ebed Yahweh when we recall the essentially voluntary nature of the 'ebed's sacrifice"⁸⁴.

When we look at Is. 52:13-53:12 LXX, we do see a number of points which harmonise well with the teaching of our Epistle. We note the stress on the Servant's humanity and human suffering (e.g. 53:3, 4), his "sinlessness" (53:9b, 11b), his vocation as a sin-offering (53:4-6, 11-12), the implication that his sacrifice was a *self-offering* (53:10), his vindication and exaltation by God (52:13, 15; 53:10-12a). What we do not see is any explicit description of the Servant as a priest and there is certainly no hint that he could be a High Priest/King after the order of Melchizedek. Neither is there any apparent sign of such an association in Jewish traditions concerning the Suffering Servant⁸⁵. This would be true also of any passages in the New Testament where a 'Servant Christology' might be postulated. We may take as an example a passage which seems very much "in tune" with the argument of Hebrews, that is Philippians 2:5-11. M. Hengel goes so far as to say, "One might almost regard the whole of Hebrews as a large-scale development of the christological theme which is already present in the Philippians hymn"⁸⁶. Yet even if we accept that there is a reference to the suffering servant in this hymn⁸⁷, there is no obvious promulgation of the priesthood of Christ. If our author based his sacerdotal Christology on the Servant figure, either directly from the OT or through the medium of existing Christian interpretation, the likelihood is that he must himself have made the link between the notion of obedient victim and that of

priesthood. Even so, we may ask whether such a deduction would have been sufficient in itself to produce the royal Melchizedekian priesthood posited of Christ in Hebrews. Further links would clearly have to be made, Psalm 110 being one of the most obvious. We would therefore agree with Peterson's comment that "Any theory as to the development of our writer's high priestly Christology must allow for a *synthesis of several ideas*"⁸⁸ [author's italics].

Indeed, we shall argue below⁸⁹ that the Isaianic Servant was not so much our author's basic source as one of those Christological understandings known to him which he brought together and expressed through his unitive presentation of Christ as the great High Priest seated at the right hand of God, having made purification for sin. Jesus the Suffering Servant is but one facet, albeit possibly a major one, of this comprehensive picture.

3.15 Son of Man

Whether Jesus, the Son of man, provides another facet is highly debatable. The crucial text here is Heb. 2:6 where the writer quotes Ps. 8:4 LXX. That quotation includes the anarthrous phrase υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου. There are those who would consider this a definite reflection of the titular usage of the Son of man to be found in the Gospel tradition (so, e.g. G. Zuntz⁹⁰, O. Cullmann⁹¹, J. Hering⁹², J.A.T. Robinson⁹³, A.J.B. Higgins⁹⁴, S. Kistemaker⁹⁵, O. Michel⁹⁶, Buchanan⁹⁷, P. Giles⁹⁸). Should this be the case, could any causal connection be made with the notion of priesthood? We have already noted⁸⁹ that Higgins sees the origin of High Priestly Christology "in the teaching of Jesus himself about the Son of Man as the intercessor or advocate", a teaching interpreted sacerdotally by an early Church which believed "in the exaltation of Jesus as the Son of Man to the heavenly world". P. Giles also sees a real link between the two Christologies, which she expresses in terms of representation: "The qualifications for the High Priest, as for the Son of Man, particularly as representative man, depend upon his humanity as well as his divinity, for the work of both is to represent man in heaven"¹⁰⁰.

For this view of Jesus as 'representative man', Giles could claim considerable scholarly support¹⁰¹. However, not all would be prepared to link this notion in Heb. 2 with a titular usage of the phrase 'son of man'. M. Casey, for example, considers that Jesus is seen here as "an ideal representative man, but not as 'the son of man'"¹⁰². He notes that the author's exposition of Psalm 8 "does not fasten on this term at all, and he shows no sign of knowing the Gospel term $\text{ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου}$ "¹⁰³. B. Lindars would endorse this assessment, concluding that "The writer appears to be completely unaware of titular usage"¹⁰⁴. Some, indeed, go further and argue that in Hebrews' quotation of Psalm 8 there is no intended reference to Jesus as all. It serves to make a statement about man which is then, in 2:9, *contrasted* with the position of Jesus¹⁰⁵.

Whatever the correct interpretation of Heb. 2:6, there is clearly no other reference to 'son of man' in the remainder of the Epistle. What we do find is an emphasis on Jesus not only as exalted but also as partaker of vulnerable humanity. Both these are seen as essential characteristics of his priesthood. Whether we regard this as a consequence of the author's absorption of an existing Son of man Christology will depend to some extent on what we make of the phrase $\text{ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου}$ in the Gospels¹⁰⁶. Yet even if we argue that the early Church's understanding of the phrase embraced both Christ's exaltation and his experience of human weakness, there is still the need to connect it in some convincing way with the concept of Christ as High Priest. Revelation 1:12ff., as we have seen¹⁰⁷, may be an example of an attempt to make such a connection, though as regards priesthood it is less than clearly spelt out and there is no obvious development of a sacerdotal Christology in the rest of the work. We have also questioned Cullmann's contention that Jesus thought of himself as Son of man and true High Priest, arguing that the evidence did not support such a conjecture¹⁰⁸. Similarly, Higgins' view that it was the intercessory character of Jesus the Son of Man which led to a priestly interpretation¹⁰⁹ does not adequately explain why a link was made between Christ's ministry of intercession and his sacrificial priesthood. The one does not inevitably lead to the other. In both Jewish and Christian thinking a person can be an intercessor without being a sacrificing priest.

When we look at some of the Son of man "passion" sayings in the Gospels, however, we do find a certain affinity with aspects of Hebrews. "The Son of man must suffer many things... and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31 and pars.). "And how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?" (Mk. 9:12, cf. Matt. 17:12). We recall that in Hebrews 2, after the quotation of Psalm 8, there is considerable emphasis on Jesus' sufferings and death (cf. 2:9, 10, 14, 15, 18), and that this chapter culminates in the presentation of Jesus as "a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God" (2:17). We note, too, that Jesus not only suffers and dies but is also "crowned with glory and honour" (2:9). His exaltation is, of course, a major theme of chapter 1. Could it be, then, that our author has in fact been influenced in his understanding of Christ by the Son of man tradition, not so much in the ways suggested by Cullmann and Higgins but rather as a result of creative reflection on the pattern underlying the Son of man 'passion sayings' (including Mk. 10:45) - a pattern stressing redemptive suffering, death and vindication? It is interesting that M. Hooker, in her study of the Son of Man in Mark, comments that in Heb. 2:6ff. we see "the same features of authority, humiliation, vindication and corporate participation which are found in Mark"¹¹⁰.

There seems little doubt that for the writer of Hebrews the human experience and sufferings of Jesus were of considerable significance, as well as his heavenly majesty. Even so, it is difficult to find a compelling reason why the source of this emphasis on suffering and glory and its expression through the category of priesthood should be confined to a Son of man context. It is, to say the least, unclear whether 2:6 was intended to have a titular connotation. It is certain that throughout the Epistle no further explicit use is made of the phrase at all. It is further the case that the pattern outlined above was not exclusive to the Son of man tradition. We have a similar pattern attaching to the description of the Suffering servant and its possible Christological use in the New Testament¹¹¹. Indeed, permeating the whole range of NT material is a stress on the suffering, death and resurrection/exaltation of Christ, into the experience and benefits of which, it is frequently claimed, believers are drawn. Perhaps, after all, it is the historical reality of the "Jesus event" and the spiritual experience of those who

responded to it which constitute the heart of the matter, that 'heart' finding expression in many and various ways.

3.16 New Adam

If we see the main emphasis of Heb. 2:6ff. as being on Jesus as 'representative man' (and there would be those who would regard this in any case as the basic meaning of the Aramaic phrase *bar nasha* as used by Jesus¹¹²), then perhaps it might be more helpful to turn to 'Adam' terminology as we seek the key to our author's understanding of Christ's priesthood. Peterson has little doubt that this is the better approach: "It is specifically an Adam Christology that merges into the picture of Christ as the perfect representative of his people in a priestly ministry, making atonement for their sins before God. The theology of high priesthood and sacrifice becomes the means of explaining how Christ as 'the leader who delivers them' can actually bring his people into the promised inheritance"¹¹³. Dunn agrees that "Hebrews presents a classic statement of Adam Christology in Heb. 2:6-18... Christ as the one in whom God's original plans for man finally (or eschatologically) came to fulfilment - that is in Christ the exalted-after-suffering one (the last Adam)"¹¹⁴. We shall argue below¹¹⁵ that the notion of Christ as last Adam was indeed a significant influence on our author, constituting one of the main Christological ideas which he sought to express through the category of priesthood. The first Adam was subject to temptation, suffering and death. So was the last Adam, but whereas the former was characterised by defeat, the latter was characterised by victory. The representative and inclusive nature of that victory and its consequences, our author felt to be powerfully summed up in the notion of the last Adam's High Priestly self-offering with its fruits of radical forgiveness and entry into 'glory' for those he was not ashamed to call his brethren. Yet, important as it is, we shall contend that an 'Adam Christology' was not sufficient in itself to produce the full picture of that great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek presented to us in Hebrews.

3.17 Son/Son of God

Another necessary part of the picture is perhaps to be found in the frequent use in the Epistle of the title 'Son' or 'Son of God' (eight and four times respectively). These descriptions of Jesus were obviously extremely meaningful to our author. He opens his treatise by underlining the character of Jesus as God's Son, a character that sets him even above the angels. Throughout, the ascription Son or Son of God is used in such a way and in such a context as to emphasize Christ's superiority and/or exalted kingly status at God's right hand, whether these are seen in ontological or eschatological terms, or indeed a combination of the two¹¹⁶ (so Heb. 1:2, 5, 8; 3:6; 5:5, 8; 6:6; 7:3, 28; 10:29). This ties in with Hengel's general claim that the Christological title 'Son of God' in the NT is concerned primarily with the exaltation of Jesus¹¹⁷. Hengel argues further: "More than any other title in the New Testament, the title Son of God connects the figure of Jesus with God... [and is] meant to express the fact that in Jesus, God himself came to men, and that the risen Christ is fully bound up with God"¹¹⁸. We shall argue that this was indeed the theological position of the author of Hebrews, a position which, for him, was most powerfully expressed through the interpretative category of High Priesthood. Into that category the title 'Son' was also drawn, along with other Christological understandings known to the author. As we shall observe, the majority of the references to Jesus as Son occur in a context which relates to his priesthood and/or kingship. Even in chapter 1, the priesthood of the Son is implied in the resounding opening section (cf. v. 3b) and thus brought into direct conjunction with those statements which emphasize God's close involvement in the Son's character and activity. Looking at the grammatical construction of v. 3 as a whole, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that it was as "ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως [θεοῦ]" that the Son made purification for sin. This is surely the clear implication of the present participle ὧν¹¹⁹. On any interpretation given to ἀπαύγασμα and χαρακτὴρ¹²⁰, our author is still proclaiming God's active participation in the sin-purifying work of the Son. This, too, "bears the very stamp of his nature".

Yet for our author, this truth, important though it was, could not be the whole story. He was utterly convinced that Christ had opened the way to God, enabling direct and confident access. He also realised that to be fully effective and inviting from a human point of view, such access had to be brought about not merely by a sovereign act of divine power but, more demandingly, by a divine power which incorporated mankind's potential for weakness as well as glory. In order truly^{to} make expiation for the sins of the people Jesus "had to be made like his brethren in every respect" (2:17f). Thus, throughout the Epistle, the real human susceptibility of Jesus is made very clear. "Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation..., being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (5:8-10). For our author, the sacerdotal character of Christ and his work was the heart of the matter. It enabled confident access to a merciful yet holy God. Christ's exalted status as Son played a not inconsiderable part in this, for it brought into his priesthood the power and purity of God himself. But more was required. This High Priest, like every other, had to be $\xi\ \xi\ \lambda\ \nu\ \theta\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\omega\nu$ (5:1) if his reconciling work was to be fully effective in encouraging people to "draw near" with confident hope to the throne of grace. He had to be son of Adam as well as Son of God: man subject to weakness and temptation, as well as one who enjoyed a relationship with God which perfectly reflected the divine creativity, glory and majesty. In Hebrews, both these emphases, with all their attendant implications¹²¹, are brought inextricably together as they are incorporated into the presentation of Jesus as High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

3.18 Psalm 110

"It is not too much to say," maintains B. Lindars, "that the entire Christology of the Epistle stems from a study of this psalm"¹²². Certainly verses 1 and 4 play a significant part in the author's argument. The first verse is quoted or alluded to at Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12f; 12:2, and the fourth at Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:3, 11, 15, 17, 21, 24, 28. It would seem reasonably clear from its frequent usage in the NT that Psalm 110:1 formed an important

"testimonium" in the early Church, being used to underline the messianic status and lordship of the risen and exalted Christ (see, e.g., Mk. 12:36; 14:62; Acts 2:34, 35; 7:55f; Romans 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:23ff; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; 1 Pet. 3:22). It seems also that Ps. 8:6, with its related idea of the subjection of enemies underfoot, was often brought into conjunction with Ps. 110:1 (so Mk. 12:36 note use of ὑποκάτω instead of ὑποπόδιον ; 1 Cor. 15:23ff; Eph. 1:22; 1 Pet. 3:22). Hebrews' use of Ps. 8:6 at 2:8f following shortly after the quotation of Ps. 110:1 at 1:13 would perhaps suggest that the author might have been aware of what Peterson calls "an established christological association of these two texts in Christian tradition"¹²³.

W.R.G. Loader argues that behind this 'established association' lay "a common cataphetical or confessional tradition"¹²⁴. That tradition issued from "a development in which at first Ps. cx.1 referred primarily to Jesus' enthronement to be the Messiah to come at the end-time... The more, however, thought turned to the interim status and function of Jesus, the more his being enthroned was linked with activities on behalf of his own"¹²⁵. Such activities included intercession (cf. Rom. 8:34). Loader, therefore, seeks to maintain that the author of Hebrews drew on this developed tradition which by means of Ps. 110:1 and Ps. 8:6 linked the exalted Christ with the function of intercession. The writer connected the enthroned Intercessor at the right hand of God with another Christological idea familiar to him - one which spoke of Christ in high-priestly terms as "leader of heavenly worship"¹²⁶. (In support of this Loader cites Rev. 1:13.) It was the linking of intercession, Ps. 110:1 and high priesthood which "probably led to the use of Ps. cx.4"¹²⁷, although Loader believes that our Epistle was not innovative in this respect as the verse "was already in use with reference to Jesus' high-priesthood within the community of the author"¹²⁸.

That our author was taking advantage of a pre-existing Christian usage of Ps. 110:1 (and Ps. 8:6) may readily be agreed. As we shall see, the first two chapters of his Epistle in particular contain a wealth of interpretative material not peculiar to him amongst NT writers. The rôle of Christ as intercessor may well be another familiar concept he had to hand. That Christ was already conceived of in high-priestly terms by the community to which Hebrews was

addressed is not so clear. As our earlier discussion has indicated, it is all but impossible to find an explicit reference, or even a thoroughly convincing allusion, to Christ as High Priest in the rest of the NT literature. Rev. 1:13 is perhaps one of the closest contenders but we recall that, in the context of the work as a whole, this is only an isolated comment. Nothing further is made of any sacerdotal status thought to accrue to Jesus. Moreover, in Revelation, Jesus is not so much the leader of heavenly worship as its recipient¹²⁹ (cf. e.g. Rev. 1:5f; 5:8-14; 7:9-12; 22:3). We might also do well to consider the possibility that should the Apocalypse be later than Hebrews, and yet from the same milieu, the seer in his opening vision of the figure in the long robe and golden girdle could be alluding to a presentation of Christ pioneered by the author of our Epistle.

We may question, too, whether Ps. 110:4 was already in Christological use among the author's community. If this was so, why did he feel the need to expound the verse so extensively and to prepare the ground so carefully for his exposition? Why did he conclude the first reference to the verse by emphasizing the extent and the difficulty of what he had to say in relation to it (cf. 5:11ff.)? If he had been dealing with material and ideas familiar to his readers he would surely not have been so thorough in his analysis or pessimistic in his assessment of their ability to understand. We have also to take into account the total lack of any citation of or passing allusion to Ps. 110:4 in the rest of the NT corpus. If it had been an existing Christian testimonium (and one which had such radical Christological implications) it is indeed strange that there is no hint of it elsewhere, especially as the point made by our author in 7:14 would surely need to be answered in any setting forward as Christ as priest: "For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests".

We are left, therefore with two very significant questions. Why did our author choose Ps. 110:1 as such an important buttress in his argument and why did he single out v. 4 for such special attention?

3.19 The "confession" of Jesus as High Priest

It is claimed by a number of commentators¹³⁰ that the use of ὁμολογία in close proximity to the description of Jesus as High Priest at 3:1, 4:14 and 10:23 indicates that the people addressed were already familiar with this Christian designation. However we understand the nature of ὁμολογία¹³¹, a key issue for our present purposes has to do with its content. Did the Hebrews community "confess" Jesus as High Priest before our author wrote his treatise? Or was this something new, by means of which the author sought to expound more deeply "the confession" known to him and his readers?

V.H. Neufeld feels that the 'confession' referred to in Hebrews was of Jesus as Son of God, instancing the close conjunction of these two in 4:14 and noting the frequency of the statement Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ in the Johannine literature¹³². That may be so, although we should notice that 3:1 and 10:23 are not directly connected to any reference to Jesus as Son. The description that *does* come through in each case is the name, Jesus. At 3:1 and 4:14 it is in the customary emphatic position assigned to it in our Epistle, so that attention is clearly focussed upon it. Its use at 10:19 has a dominating influence on the whole section from v. 19 to v. 25. Was it, then, the appellation "Jesus" that formed the main substance of the ὁμολογία and therefore the familiar foundation on which our author sought to build? This would fit well with Neufeld's general contention that the basic Christian confession was the name Ἰησοῦς, to which various ascriptions were added¹³³. This possibility might be reinforced if 'the confession' were primarily concerned with liturgical and/or devotional use. As V. Taylor says, "From a very early point a religious quality attached itself to the name"¹³⁴. He cites Phil. 2:10 ('in the name of Jesus every knee should bow') and sees "the same emphasis" in Hebrews "in the manner in which the writer holds back the personal name" until the end of a phrase¹³⁵. Certainly the name "Jesus" is much used by the author throughout his epistle (nine times)¹³⁶. Perhaps, then, (and especially in view of the theological affinities between Hebrews and Phil. 2:5-11)¹³⁷ our author is addressing a community in which utterance of and veneration for the name of Jesus was an established feature of prayer and worship. We note that 4:14 and 10:23 are both in the context of "drawing near"

and that 10:23, in particular, occurs in a section thought by many to be heavily liturgical¹³⁸. There are hints elsewhere in the NT that Jesus' name could have been used in this way in the early Church. Stephen in Acts 7:59 addresses his prayer to Jesus (κύριε Ἰησοῦ) and Acts 9:17 suggests that "the Lord" with whom Ananias had been speaking before going to Saul (Acts 9:10-16) was "Ἰησοῦς ὁ ὀφθαλμοὺς σου ἐν τῇ ὁδοῦ". At Acts 9:21; 22:16 and 1 Cor. 1:2, the followers of Jesus are described as those who invoke his name (ἐπικαλούμενοι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ; cf. Rom. 9:13. where from the preceding context 'Lord' would seem to refer to Jesus). The same formula is regularly used in the LXX for worship and prayer offered to God (cf. e.g. Gen. 4:26; 13:4; Ps. 105:1; Jer. 10:45; Joel 2:32). Does this indicate, then, as R.T. France contends, "that prayer to Jesus was a normal and distinguishing characteristic of Christians" in those early days¹³⁹? R.P. Martin, in his study of Phil. 2:5-11, inclines towards a positive answer in saying that "the glorified Jesus is the object of worship in the same way as the Jews invoked their covenant God"¹⁴⁰. Perhaps it is against such a background that we should set Heb. 13:15, with its reference to "καρπὸν χειλέων ὁμολογούντων τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ". Throughout the section from v.12 to v.15a has referred consistently to Jesus. If we accept that the same applies to the concluding αὐτοῦ of v. 15, we may have another example of O.T. passages concerning God (Ps. 49:14, 23 LXX; Hos. 14:3 LXX) being applied to Jesus in the context of praise and worship (cf. Phil. 2:10-11a and Is. 45:23). The community gives glory to God by means of "confessing" the name of Jesus.

It may even be that the primitive confession Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν κύριος (cf. Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11) was also a significant factor¹⁴¹ (especially as each of the examples referred to would fit readily into a context of Christian worship, 1 Cor. 12:3 quite markedly so). The author of Hebrews obviously knew and took for granted this designation for Jesus (cf. 2:3; 7:14; 13:20) and it is surely implicit in his use of Ps. 110:1. Indeed, we shall argue below that it may well have been the community's unbalanced concentration, particularly in worship, on the exalted status of Jesus as Lord (and perhaps Son) that was leading them towards the dangerous position against which the writer sought so urgently to warn¹⁴².

At this point we may contend that there is no compulsive reason in the texts cited from Hebrews, or in their context, why Jesus' High Priesthood should be regarded as an *existing* ingredient in the community's "confession". Indeed, there are indications to the contrary. At 3:1 the verb *κατανοέω* is used, a word which implies the need for very careful and concentrated attention to the subject matter concerned in order to achieve understanding¹⁴³. The use of such a verb is at least consistent with the view that the notion of Jesus as High Priest (and perhaps also Apostle) was not a familiar one to those addressed. It required a real effort of comprehension (cf. 5:11ff.). Perhaps it also required concentrated *contemplative* attention (a further sense of *κατανοέω*). If the community fixed their spiritual eyes¹⁴⁴ on Jesus as high priest (no doubt in the context of worship) the 'rightness' of this understanding would be more truly perceived (cf. 12:2). The point is underlined if, as is grammatically possible¹⁴⁵, we translate 3:1, "Consider carefully (and contemplate) the Jesus of our confession as apostle and high priest". (For a similar construction see 2:9 and 12:2, and compare 6:1). Even if we translate in the more usual way, the point remains a viable one. To hold that the author was adding something new to his community's confession of Jesus would also help to explain why he prepares the ground with such care and eventually expounds the idea so fully. The preliminary mentions of Jesus as High Priest at 2:17 and 3:1 do not, *contra* some commentators¹⁴⁶, signal by their abruptness the assumption of an existing knowledge of the concept. In both cases, the opening *ὁ θεὸς* suggests that what is said in the verse forms the logical outcome of a previous argument¹⁴⁷. The contents of chapters 1 and 2 are meant by the author to lead his readers to a conviction of the "fittingness" of his 'new teaching', a teaching which he realises is *δυσεργήνεν* (5:11) and therefore in need of a gradual approach, in building on an existing framework of belief as well as giving a thorough and clarificatory exposition. 4:14ff. takes the argument of 2:17-3:1 rather further and 10:23 forms part of a consequential exhortation that emerges out of the culmination of his theological exposition of Christ's priesthood in 10:1-18. It may also be significant that at 3:1 'consider' is in the second person plural whereas *κράτουμεν* at 4:14 and *κατέχουμεν* at 10:23 are in the first person plural. The readers are first exhorted to 'consider' something already apprehended by the author and then, after the opportunity for some deliberation, invited to

join him in committing themselves to this truth. The author of Hebrews is not only a gifted pastor and theologian, he is also a skilful teacher.

3.20 The concept of a new covenant

The idea that Jesus has inaugurated a new covenant is clearly a significant element in the author's overall argument. He deals with the subject specifically and at length from 8:6-10:18, quoting extensively from Jer. 31:31ff. at 8:8-12 and 10:16-17. At 8:6, 9:15 and 12:24, Jesus is described as the mediator of a new covenant and at 9:20, 10:22, 29 and 12:24, there are references to "the blood of the covenant" or "the blood of sprinkling" which underline the author's conviction that the death of Jesus enables entry into a new covenant with God. No other New Testament writing pays so much explicit attention to this notion¹⁴⁸ and, as A. Snell points out, it is "featured" in that part of our Epistle which forms a climax of the author's exposition of what Christ's priestly work has accomplished¹⁴⁹.

The question we need to ask, therefore, is whether the idea that Jesus has brought in a new covenant has given birth to the idea of his priesthood. One can readily see how it involved regarding the death of Jesus as sacrificial. The first covenant was ratified with the blood of sacrificial animals (cf. the ritual described in Ex. 24 and alluded to at Heb. 9:19f.). So, in our author's 'fulfilment scheme', the inauguration of the new and better covenant must have required *par excellence* the shedding of blood. This necessity must have been compounded for the author as he pondered on forgiveness of sins as a major feature of the new covenant (cf. 10:17-18), knowing that under the old order "χωρὶς αἱματεκχυσίας οὐ γίνεται ἄφεσις (9:22). How much more, then, must this have been the case with the finally effective sin-offering of Jesus (cf. 9:14).

There is in our author's thinking a powerful inter-relatedness between Jesus' mediation of the new covenant, a mediation which involved his death and bore fruit in the forgiveness of sins, and the inauguration of the old covenant along with its provisions for dealing with sin, all of which involved sacri-

fice. However, such an association does not inevitably lead to a sacerdotal interpretation of the person of Christ. We recall that in the ratification ceremony of Ex. 24 priests played no part (unless Moses be regarded in this light)¹⁵⁰. We note that where in NT writings other than Hebrews the concept of a new covenant seems to be clearly in mind (Mk. 14:24; ? Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6), there is no suggestion that Christ is being thought of as a priest, not even where the concept appears closely linked with a sacrificial interpretation of Christ's death, as in the words of institution at the Last Supper¹⁵¹. Our author may, of course, have made the connection with priesthood himself, perhaps through his reflection upon the manner in which the two covenants came to terms with the problem of sin. The yearly Day of Atonement ritual featured the supreme sacrifice for sin possible under the old covenant and there had to be a high priest to offer it. The new covenant provided the complete and final act of atonement, the fulfilment and abrogation of former acts, so it, too, must needs have a High Priest to make the offering. Who else could this be but Jesus?

Yet even if the writer's thinking did run on these lines, we cannot assume that this was his *starting* point. In all probability he was familiar with the belief that Jesus' death had inaugurated a new covenant but it may well be that this is, again, only one element of the existing raw materials that he built into his presentation of Christ as High Priest. Certainly we have to reckon with a number of factors that are not immediately explained by reference to a 'new covenant stimulus': the stress on Christ's royal priesthood "after the order of Melchizedek", on his heavenly exaltation and activity, on the great significance of his human experience and sufferings. Though we may have isolated another important feature of the finished design, we have not yet uncovered the original blueprint.

3.21 Conclusion and preliminary hypothesis

We have now examined a wide range of candidates in the search for our author's basic source of inspiration in presenting Christ as great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. To a greater or lesser degree, we have found all these candidates wanting. None appears to be sufficient in itself fully to

explain the comprehensive and many-faceted picture we find in Hebrews, though we must say that the strongest contenders seem to be from a background of existing Christian tradition. The conclusion to which we are drawn, therefore, is that in the author of Hebrews we have a very creative theologian, one who did not create *ex nihilo* but who rather drew together a variety of the raw materials available to him, building from them a new and unitive interpretation of the person and work of Christ.

Why did he do this? What provided the stimulus for such creative thinking? Was it simply, in Moffatt's words, "a flash of inspiration"⁵²? Did it emerge from his theological reflection on the character and work of Christ? Without discounting either of these possibilities, we may perhaps suggest a way of approaching the question that has a more definite contextual base. Could it be that our author's original starting point was not so much abstract doctrinal thinking as his own personal experience of Jesus, particularly in a setting of prayer and worship? If so, his experience must have been of a very "comprehensive" Jesus, one who held together and made sense of a whole variety of emphases, one in whom there was true integration and balance. Certainly we find in Hebrews both an inclusive theology and a distinct backcloth of worship⁵³ and it is not difficult to believe that for our author, as for the early Church generally, "Christian worship was fundamental to the formation and development of christological doctrine and thought"⁵⁴.

It could have been in such a matrix that the idea of Jesus as High Priest was conceived. The idea itself is, after all, intimately connected with worship and the means of 'drawing near' to God. Moreover, as the author of Hebrews realised, it had the capacity to embody and integrate a considerable number of earlier ideas, both Jewish and Christian. Not surprisingly he seized upon it and expressed it to the community with that carefully argued enthusiasm which was perhaps typical of his personality. Yet this was not all. His treatise contains not only the enthusiastic expounding of an idea but also urgent warning and exhortation. Was he aware, then, that there was in the community he was addressing a potentially dangerous imbalance in their understanding of the Christian faith - an imbalance which involved undue concentration on an "exaltation spirituality" and therefore an "exaltation theology"?

If his readers focussed too exclusively on worshipping Jesus as exalted Lord, "crowned with glory and honour", "seated at the right hand of God", this may have had a number of consequences:-

- a) It might mean that they were not paying sufficient attention to the real humanity, temptation and suffering of Jesus and the need to be "partakers of Christ" in these aspects as well as sharing his exaltation and glory.
- b) They may thus have been tempted to fall away when faced with possible persecution and suffering. Their former 'triumphalism' prevented them from understanding the significance and cost of the "great salvation" won by Jesus, significance and cost both for Jesus and for themselves.
- c) If they did indeed have a Jewish background, "exaltation spirituality" coupled with the increasing difficulties and dangers of being Christians could have made them wonder whether the holy God did after all require those means of mediation and approach He had *formerly* ordained. Perhaps they had been wrong to abandon them, had presumed too much on their glorification of Jesus and were now feeling the divine displeasure.

Such a state of affairs would help to explain why in Hebrews

- 1. The author underlined so forcibly the human experience and suffering of Jesus *as well as* his exaltation. He evidently believed that *both* these emphases were needed for a correct apprehension of Jesus.
- 2. The author argued for the direct relevance and importance of Jesus' human experience in his *exalted* state (cf. e.g. 4:14-16).
- 3. The author hammered away at his conviction that the old covenant had been fulfilled and therefore abrogated by the work of Jesus; that a new covenant was now in being which allowed direct and fearless access to the very Presence of God himself; that the new covenant had been inaugurated by the High Priestly self-offering of Jesus, in which God himself was directly and positively involved; that this High Priestly self-

offering fulfilled once and for all the purpose and provisions of the Day of Atonement, and indeed of all the former sacrificial rites.

4. The author stressed that the concept of Jesus as High Priest underlined not only his exalted, heavenly status but also his divinely ordered and empowered vocation to know human weakness, suffering and death.
- 5 The author emphasized that divine displeasure would not rest upon those who abandoned the *old* order of things but upon those who, having 'tasted' of the new covenant and its benefits, failed to commit themselves wholeheartedly and faithfully to it, whatever the human cost. They must accept the revolutionary fact that God had done a "new thing".

We suggest, therefore, as a preliminary hypothesis, that the writer of Hebrews, in setting forward Christ as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, was presenting an idea which was new to himself and his readers, an idea which emerged from his own religious experience, particularly in the sphere of prayer and worship. The ground was in many ways prepared for the appearance of this idea by his awareness of a wide range of Jewish and Christian thinking and his urgent concern for the potentially dangerous spiritual condition of the community with which he had to do. His perception of Christ as High Priest led him to that integrated theology which confronts us in his Epistle. It was by means of this integrated theology that he hoped earnestly to keep his readers 'on course' in their Christian pilgrimage.

We must now test this thesis against the evidence of our author's own writing, and in doing so, explore its radical theological implications. We shall look particularly closely at chapters 1 and 2, for it is in this opening section that we are provided with essential pointers to an understanding of our author's exposition of Jesus as great High Priest.

Chapter 4

Hebrews 1 and 2: an exploration of their message

(1) Hebrews 1

4.1 Introductory

In Hebrews 1 and 2, our author has attempted to set out a balanced and comprehensive Christology in largely familiar terms. He seeks to remind his readers of the crucial necessity of accepting the *entire* Christian 'package', which includes not only Christ's exalted lordship but also his humiliation and suffering. By such a powerful opening re-statement (and sometimes re-working) of existing Christian belief the writer hoped to bring his community to a position where they recognised the danger of their present condition *and* began to apprehend the helpfulness, indeed the inevitability, of seeing Jesus as High Priest. If this latter notion has come to the author himself in the context of worship, he has then thought it through very carefully in the light of what he already knew of Jesus from his own (Jewish?) Christian background. He has also applied it very carefully to the situation of the community. Being a good teacher, he realised that the seed of a new and perhaps difficult idea had to be sown in prepared soil if it were to take root and have optimum opportunity for growth. He was aware, too, that growth is often, perforce, a slow process and he knew that, in this case, great care was needed. Thus his magisterial opening chapters were concerned, in effect, with preparing the ground and sowing the seed.

This becomes clear at 2:17, which, as a number of commentators have observed¹, seems to mark something of a 'turning point' in the argument. The use of ὁθεν surely suggests that the writer is now about to explain the central point of his inaugural exposition. This adverb, as Westcott says, "marks a result which flows naturally... from what has gone before"². What our author has been building up to is that Jesus *had* to become like his brethren in every

respect in order that (ἵνα) he might become a merciful and faithful high priest. As A.C. Purdy put it, "The writer's thought... moves logically toward the priestly principle"³. For the writer, to minister effectively to humanity, the perfect priest would have to share fully in the nature of man as well as that of God (cf. 4:14-16; 5:1-10). Only so could salvation from sin and confident access to God be completely assured. Only so could man have an effective Representative at the right hand of God. It is thus part of the author's 'deliberate plan and foreknowledge that "it is not until he has emphasized both these aspects (i.e. Sonship and humanity) that he calls Jesus a High Priest"⁴. The 'fittingness' of such a description had first to be demonstrated in familiar terms, delineated by clear, bold strokes.

4.2 Theocentric emphasis

As we examine this 'demonstration', one thing soon becomes clear. Although the first two chapters are quite obviously concerned with Christology, God is very much the subject. It is God who creates and communicates (1:1-2); it is God who is the source of Christ's being (1:2-3) and who defines Christ's status; it is God who bears witness to the truth of the Christian message "by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit", the latter being distributed "according to his will" (2:4); it is God who determines to whom "the world to come" is to be subjected (2:5, 8) and it is by God's grace that Jesus tastes death for everyone (2:9)⁵; it is God who brings many sons to glory and who makes the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering (2:10). Neither is this theocentric emphasis⁶ confined to the beginning of the Epistle. Throughout, the stress is on God and his activity, a stress that is reinforced when we bear in mind the significance of what is said of Christ in 1:1-3. God speaks, and therefore acts, in one who is Son (ὁ υἱός). He is thus directly involved in that purifying of sins which formed the purpose and character of Jesus' priesthood. Indeed, we might say that God's concern under the old covenant to provide his people with means of expiation and approach revealed a 'priestly' aspect to his character which found full expression in the sacerdotal work of Jesus. When God "hailed" Jesus as a high priest (5:10: προσάγορεύεις), he was greeting one who was



χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ (1:3), not only 'a man after his own heart' but one who had come *from* his heart, who bore the very stamp of his nature. From the outset of the Epistle, then, our author strongly underlines God's active involvement in the person and work of Jesus. God not only approves - he initiates and, in his Son, brings to completion his work of salvation. This is made abundantly clear in the first two chapters, as is the important corollary - that the suffering Jesus is as much part of God's plan as the exalted Jesus.

Such a strong theocentric emphasis might well point to the possibility that the Epistle's readers were being tempted to question whether God had in fact set forward and exalted Jesus. Perhaps they had been wrong to believe this, and God was now angry with them for departing from exclusive allegiance to him and neglecting the precautions required by his holiness. So our author tells them, in the strongest possible terms, that by wavering in their commitment to the Christian message, they are in fact placing themselves in a very parlous position (cf. 2:1-4). What they are in danger of doing would amount to a rejection of the new covenant brought about and confirmed by God, a covenant so much better than the old that the consequences of rejecting it must be correspondingly more terrible (2:2-3). It is not neglecting the old way that displeases God but rather failure to follow single-mindedly the "new and living way" opened up by Jesus.

4.3 The Prologue

The absolute superiority of God's activity in his Son is clearly stated in the Epistle's prologue (1:1-4) and, as Spicq says, "the whole essence of the epistle is already enclosed in these four verses"⁷. They are very carefully expressed and "deliberately worded"⁸, being doubtless intended to have a powerful impact. The substance of that impact concerns God's communication in and relationship with one who is son. The reader is left in no doubt that this son is a supremely exalted figure and that his exaltation is by divine appointment, not to say divine right. What we have here, in effect, is a creative blend of Christologies.

4.31 Prophet

When we examine the ingredients used in this blending we find that they are by no means exclusive to Hebrews and that they cover an interesting range of ideas. The first two verses provide us with an echo of the notion that Jesus was the (eschatological) prophet of God (cf. Matt. 13:57 & pars; 21:11, 46; Luke 7:16, 39; 9:8, 19; 13:33; 24:19; Jn. 1:21; 4:19; 6:14; 7:40, 52; 9:17; Acts 3:22, 23; 7:37. See also 1QS9:10f. for the Qumran community's expectation of the coming of a prophet in the end time)⁹. As Longenecker puts it, "the opening words of the Letter to the Hebrews... are clearly based on a view of Jesus as the Prophet of eschatological consummation"¹⁰. God having spoken... spoke. There is continuity here rather than contrast. The same God spoke in the prophets and in a son, albeit "in these last days" in a concentrated and final way.

4.32 Heir

We note also in v.2 a reference to the Son as "heir". Moffatt sees this as one of those "traces of other and more popular ideas of Christianity" preserved in Hebrews¹¹. Certainly it seems that the idea of Christ as God's heir was part of the early Church's Christological thinking (cf. Matt. 21:33-41 // Mk. 12:1-9 // Lk. 20:9-16, where a succession of servants (= prophets?) leads to the sending of the son and heir;¹² Rom. 8:17, where believers, as sons of God, are said to be "joint heirs with Christ"; cf. also Matt. 11:27 // Lk. 10:22 - "All things have been delivered to me by my Father"; Jn. 3:35; 5:22; 13:3; 17:2). In a number of other places, the heirship of Christ is implied in references to believers as heirs (cf. Rom. 4:13; Gal. 3:29; 4:1, 7; Eph. 3:6; Titus 3:7; Jas. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:7). What Christians are to inherit is described in a variety of ways:- "[t]he world" (Rom. 4:13), "eternal life" (Titus 3:7), the promised "kingdom" (Jas. 2:5), "[t]he grace of life" (1 Pet. 3:7), to which could be added from Hebrews "salvation" (1:14), "the promise(s)" (6:12, 17), and "the eternal inheritance" (9:15). The latter verse and its context perhaps add further clarification. By his death, Christ, the "heir of all things", bequeaths to his followers "the promised eternal inheritance". They are thus, by impli-

cation, to share in his own inheritance, the character of which is spelt out elsewhere in the Epistle i.e. a filial relationship with God (1:1-4 of the Son; cf. 2:10ff.; 12:3-11 of his followers; compare Rev. 21:7), dominion over creation (1:2-3c of the Son; cf. 2:5ff. of his followers), 'glory' (1:3-4 of the Son; cf. 2:10 of his followers). Such a state of affairs is well summed up in Paul's phrase from Rom. 8:17: we are "fellow heirs with Christ... that we may... be glorified with him". However, the principle contained in the *missing* words is crucial, for the writer of Hebrews as well as for Paul, though our author expresses it somewhat differently. We shall be glorified with Christ "provided we *suffer* with him". Too much stress on the glorious 'end-product' of the Christian inheritance could well obscure the inevitability of suffering, both for the Son and the sons. We shall argue that such was the symptom of the condition with which Hebrews was trying to deal. Without in any way 'devaluing' the glory, the writer nevertheless makes very clear the need for the 'heir of all things' to suffer and for his fellow-heirs to be prepared to endure hardship and persecution.

4.33 King

Christ the supreme prophet and heir is also, according to Heb. 1:3, the one who "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high". As we have seen in our earlier discussion³, this allusion to Ps. 110:1 is the first of several references to the verse in Hebrews (see also 1:13; 8:1; 10:12f.; 12:2). On each occasion, attention is drawn to the exalted figure of Christ seated at God's *right hand* and at 1:13 and 10:13 this is combined with the divine promise to defeat Christ's enemies. Thus far, our author's usage of Ps. 110:1 is very much in line with that in other N.T. literature (see Mk. 12:35ff. & parallels; 14:62; Acts 2:34, 35; 7:55f.; Rom. 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:23ff.; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; 1 Pet. 3:22). Christ is seen as messianic King, having God's full approval and occupying a place of highest honour in heaven. Hebrews, however, places more consistent stress on this than any other N.T. writing⁴. The author's five references to Ps. 110:1 heavily outweigh the number of allusions in any other single document. Further, he not only emphasizes the activity of God in exalting Jesus but also Jesus' active rôle in taking his appointed heavenly

seat (cf. 1:3 ; 8:1; 10:12 = ἐκάθισεν ; 12:2 = κεκάθικεν). Christ's kingship is again overtly proclaimed at 1:8f. and then, indirectly, through the Melchizedek typology. The exalted Jesus is the exalted King/High Priest, a combination that is made explicit at 8:1 but which is already implied at 1:3:-
καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος ἐκάθισεν
ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς .

As Westcott says, here "the priestly and the royal works of Christ are placed together in the closest connection"¹⁵, a connection found nowhere else in the NT¹⁶. One feels that our author would not be happy with Moffatt's assessment of his achievement in this respect, that he has employed an "older militant messianic category which is relevant in the first chapter... but out of place in the argument from priesthood"¹⁷. For the writer of Hebrews, kingship and priesthood are vitally linked, for together they underline that inter-relationship between suffering and glory which he believed to be at the heart of the Christian message.

4.34 New Adam

W.D. Davies remarks that "Hebrews which makes the temptation of Christ central has no reference to Adam"¹⁸. This may be true in terms of mention of the specific name, but we shall suggest that a reasonable case can be made for seeing the figure of Adam behind a significant part of our author's argument¹⁹. Can that figure be discerned in the Epistle's prologue? There are some indications which could be regarded as positive. Christ is described in v. 2 as a "son". Adam is referred to in Lk. 1:38 as son of God, a notion which is perhaps approached by Genesis 5:1ff., where Adam begets a son in his image and calls his name Seth, even as he has been made in God's image and named by his Maker. Certainly by the NT period there was current in Judaism thinking which assigned to Adam (particularly in his pre-Fall condition) a very exalted state. Ecclus. 49:16 talks of him as ὑπὲρ πάντων ἰσῶν ἐν τῇ κτίσει . Several of the Qumran documents mention "the glory of Adam" into which the covenanters will be privileged to enter²⁰, and in 1 Enoch 69:11 and Wisdom 1:13, 14 and 2:23, 24 we find the belief that Adam was created to be immortal.

Most interestingly for our present purposes, Philo says that what God breathed into the first man (Gen. 2:7) was an ἀπαύγασμα of His thrice-blessed nature²¹ (cf. Heb. 1:3 - ὃς ὧν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης). We may compare the rabbinic idea that Adam's face shone with the glory of God²², an idea which some commentators find reflected in 2 Cor. 3:18 and Rev. 1:16²³. It is perhaps not entirely absent from the picture of Christ in Heb. 1:3a. Further support comes from our author's use of χαρακτήρ (like ἀπαύγασμα a hapax legomenon in the N.T.). Philo frequently uses this word to describe the image of God in man²⁴ and though we have discounted the direct dependence of Hebrews upon Philo as regards Christ's High Priesthood²⁵ it is at least possible that the word usage referred to above was part of the thought world of Hellenistic Judaism more generally. The glorification of Adam was clearly not exclusive to Philo. We should perhaps also take into account the tradition that Adam at his creation was superior to the angels. So, in the Life of Adam and Eve we read at 13:2-14:2: "God the Lord spoke: 'Here is Adam. I have made him in our image and likeness.' And Michael went out and called all the angels, saying, 'Worship the image of God as the Lord God has commanded.' And Michael himself worshipped first."²⁶ This tradition may have particular relevance to Heb. 1:6 ("Let all the angels of God worship him") but it might also be a background factor in 1:4 ("having become as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs"). There may even be an allusion here to the concept of Christ the Son and new Adam as head of the new creation. This would tie in with the exposition concerning "the world to come" in 2:5ff. In this new world, subjected to Jesus and not to the angels, God's purposes for mankind are to be fully realised, but that possibility is only opened up through the suffering and death of Jesus, as he makes priestly expiation for the sins of the people. So in the prologue, he in whom God has spoken "in these last days" comes to the place of supreme honour above the angels καθαρισμόν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος. The new age is inaugurated by dealing with that which had marred the destiny of the first Adam - the reality of sin.

4.35 Wisdom/ Agent of Creation

But what of the first creation? Our author states firmly that the Son in whom God spoke "to us" is also to be recognized as the one through whom God made and sustains the world. Like Col. 1:15-19 and Jn. 1:1-18 (and cf. 1 Cor. 8:6 and Rev. 3:14), which say "similar things in verbal independence of each other"²⁷, the opening verses of Hebrews speak of one who is agent and upholder of creation. This marks a development well summarized by M. Hengel: "The confession of the exaltation of Jesus as Son of Man and Son of God in the resurrection and his appointment as God's eschatological plenipotentiary immediately posed for earliest Christianity the question of the relationship of Jesus to other intermediary figures, whether the supreme angels or Wisdom-Torah"²⁸. We might add that one of the likeliest contexts for the emergence of such "confession" and such questioning would be that of Christian worship. Indeed, it has been suggested that in 1:2-3 our author is making use of an existing Christian hymn, which could be set out in five lines as follows:

whom he appointed heir of all things
through whom also he made the world
who is (the) radiance of God's glory
and (the) stamp of his being,
sustaining all things by his word of power.²⁹

This is very much reminiscent of Jewish 'Wisdom language' (cf. Prov. 8:22ff.; Wisdom 7:24-27; 10:1-2) and it would certainly seem that amongst the other ideas he is incorporating, the writer of Hebrews is seeking to present Christ as God's true Wisdom. There is a particularly close parallel in Wisdom 7:26, where σοφία is described as Ἀπαύγασμα --- φωτὸς δῶδίου. So we see that the same phrase in Heb. 1:3a is capable of a dual interpretation - God's glory shown forth in true Adam³⁰ or in true Wisdom. Like the author of the Fourth Gospel, our author is well aware of the theological usefulness of ambiguity. In fact, a great deal of the power of his opening statement lies in its drawing together of a whole cluster of ideas, an achievement made the easier by a lack of rigid definition in many of the ideas concerned. Thus, as Dunn points out, "the Wisdom christology of the hymn could well be merged with

the Son of God christology of the author of Hebrews because both shared the same ambivalence present in Wisdom language, and to some extent also in Adam christology³¹. The author was working with a fairly fluid mixture.

The 'Wisdom element' in this mixture is nonetheless of considerable interest. What does it draw from existing Jewish and Christian understanding and why is it used? Are we to see it against the kind of Jewish background envisaged by Dunn, in which God's 'Wisdom' is but the personification of divine activity, rigidly controlled by strict monotheism³² Do we follow the line suggested by Sandmel, that in the time after Proverbs, the notion of Wisdom as an entity was transformed from personification, that is, from speaking about Wisdom figuratively as if it were a person, into a view of Wisdom as a hypostasis ('actual being')³³ Or are we rather to allow more scope for 'poetic licence', looking to the realm of poetry rather than doctrinal thinking³⁴ and seeing the Jewish language of Wisdom as pointing to an intuitive and experiential understanding of plurality and interrelatedness (even femininity?)³⁵ in the one God? The literature can certainly be read in this light. Many of the passages in which Wisdom language is employed come across as vividly poetic³⁶. Indeed, William Gray may well have focussed the significance of Wisdom language by describing it as "root metaphor"³⁷ - something which gives suggestive expression to a fundamental insight into the character of God without the need for precise doctrinal definition. Or, as J.H. Balchim puts it³⁸, "wisdom language was not so much theological as devotional". Christian hymnody and 'devotional' writing often follows this path³⁹, a path tellingly illuminated by David Daiches in his 1983 Gifford Lectures on the theme 'God and the Poets'⁴⁰. In his lecture on 'Poetry and Belief', Daiches contends that "great poetry" (among which he would include much biblical material, especially psalms and other 'wisdom literature') "carries beliefs into its language in such a way that it can achieve a communication transcending the bounds of those beliefs"⁴¹ It "brings form to bear on a communication which, while not adequately and sometimes not at all paraphrasable in other terms, is nevertheless a communication; it says something... What it says illuminates experience..."⁴². In such a way could the basic tenet of monotheism interact with an apprehension of 'variety' within God. The doctrinal 'bounds' were transcended but not destroyed.

It would not be surprising, then, if (especially Hellenistic?) Jewish Christians took up such powerful metaphorical language in their attempt to express the relationship with God of a Jesus who was crucial in their conversion and a living reality in their experience. The poetry of worship would provide an ideal context for such an application, for the metaphor with its connotation of divine sovereignty sat well with the perceived lordship of Jesus and the conviction of his intimate connection with God. The apprehension of cosmic significance must have fallen readily into place, along with the notion of some kind of pre-existence⁴³. Moreover, because of the human particularity of Jesus, the 'applied wisdom metaphor' had to become decidedly personal in character⁴⁴.

The 'danger' in all this, however, (a danger that was identified by our author) was that it tended very much in a triumphalist direction. It did not take sufficient account of "death on a cross" and, as Fiorenza has suggested⁴⁵, contained at least the seeds of a Gnostic approach to Christ. Thus, whenever Paul makes use of Wisdom language, he invariably points to the centrality of the death of Jesus (cf. esp. 1 Cor. 1:17-31; Phil. 2:5-11). So also with our author. If he is indeed quoting in his Prologue a 'Wisdom hymn' known to his community, he has injected it with a phrase (κατακρισμοὶ τῶν ἡμαρτιῶν πολλοῦ μένος) ⁴⁶ that both points to the human passion of the 'cosmic Christ' and indicates a way of understanding that passion which he is later to develop at length. Jesus the Son is certainly for our author the true wisdom of God but in a way which incorporates what Paul would call the 'divine foolishness' of incarnation and death. The agent and sustainer of creation who is radiance of God's glory and seated at God's right hand is also he who made purification of sins. Further, it seems that, for our author, God's true wisdom is to be identified with one who was, from at least before the creation of the world, God's Son.

4.36 Son

The notion of Christ as God's Son is, of course, one of our author's most prominent convictions, not least in the Prologue. That notion was itself of somewhat variegated pedigree. Hengel sees the title 'Son of God' as issuing

from four main sources: Jesus' sense of filial relationship with God; the messianic argument from scripture (especially 2 Sam. 7:12-14; Pss. 2 & 89); God's exaltation of the Son of Man; and the tendency to translate 'ebed with $\pi\alpha\iota\varsigma$, then^{to} interpret it as 'Son'⁴⁷ Hengel concludes that "the confession 'Son of God' is primarily an explicit expression of Jesus' exaltation"⁴⁸. This is certainly true of Hebrews' understanding of the term⁴⁹, but did our author think of the Son's exalted status as something confined to the post-Resurrection period (as might be inferred from many other passages in the N.T. where the title is used)? Or did he conceive of God's Son as having some form of pre-existent greatness? Of some importance here is the precise meaning of $\varepsilon\theta\eta\kappa\epsilon\nu$ in 1:2. God spoke to us $\varepsilon\nu\ \nu\iota\omega$, $\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \varepsilon\theta\eta\kappa\epsilon\nu\ \kappa\lambda\eta\rho\omicron\nu\acute{\omicron}\mu\omicron\nu\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omicron\nu$. The question is, when was he appointed? "In these last days" - or from eternity? There is unfortunately nothing in the word or context to give us a definitive answer. Westcott concludes that the divine appointment "belongs to the eternal order" and a considerable number of commentators take a similar view⁵⁰. Is there any supportive evidence for this? To begin obliquely - if there is indeed any connection between Heb.1:1-2 and the Parable of the Vineyard⁵¹, there might be some significance in the fact that in the parable the ruler sends his son and heir (cf. Heb. 3:1 - the "apostle of our confession"). On an allegorical interpretation of the parable this could suggest that God's son *did* have a pre-existent identity both as son and heir⁵². Perhaps our author, for whom the sonship and heirship of Christ was evidently of some importance, had a similar pattern in mind. Certainly we must take into account his use of the present participles $\acute{\omega}\nu$ and $\phi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega\nu$ (1:3) in emphatic positions at the beginnings of clauses. This could be taken to indicate our author's conviction of the eternal character and function of the one who is son (to whom $\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ in v. 3 clearly refers), for there is no suggestion here of a specific starting point to his sonship, whatever conclusion we may reach as to his appointment as heir. Further, Heb. 5:7, 8 seem also to point to a state as son already enjoyed before "the days of his flesh" - $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \pi\epsilon\rho\ \acute{\omega}\nu\ \nu\iota\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$, $\varepsilon\mu\kappa\theta\epsilon\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\phi'\acute{\omega}\nu\ \varepsilon\pi\alpha\theta\epsilon\nu\ \tau\eta\nu\ \nu\pi\alpha\kappa\omicron\mu\eta\nu$

(v. 8). Other indications might be found in 1:8 and 1:10+12.

Whatever the correct translation of $\acute{\omicron}\ \Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\varsigma\ \sigma\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\omicron}\ \Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$

$\tau\omicron\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\iota\omega\nu\alpha\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\alpha}\iota\omega\nu\omicron\varsigma$, in v. 8⁵³, it is clear that the Son's exaltation is $\varepsilon\iota\varsigma$ and if vv. 10-12 are indeed to be taken of the Son (which seems the most

natural reading)⁵⁴ then he was certainly present at the creation and is characterised by 'eternal changelessness' (cf. 13:8 and compare 7:3).

Moreover, the choice of such a clear relationship word as "son", rather than the more abstract (but equally applicable) Logos or Wisdom, surely suggests that the pre-existence envisaged is 'personal' rather than ideal. The Jesus our author had encountered and contemplated (cf. 3:1) was more than an idea, more even than a poetic intuition; he was a living being, whose call to allegiance and devotion had to be clarified in terms of his relationship with God. In choosing to employ sonship language, the author of Hebrews is proclaiming his conviction that the relationship was personal and always had been⁵⁵.

It might be said, of course, that 1:5 militates against an assumption of personal pre-existence. Ps. 2:7 appears to require for the Son a particular moment of "birth" (σήμερον) and where the verse is applied elsewhere in the N.T. (Mk. 1:11 & pars.; Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4), this 'moment' is closely associated with the baptism or resurrection of Christ. Here in Heb. 1:5, however, there is no such obvious contextual reference, particularly as v. 6 could be interpreted of either the Nativity or the Parousia or, indeed, of entry into the 'new world'⁵⁶. At 5:5-6, where Ps. 2:7 is used in close conjunction with Ps. 110:4, thus possibly implying an 'Ascension reference'⁵⁷, it is perhaps important to notice the use of the aorist participle in relation to Ps. 2:7 (ὁ λαλῶν) and a present tense in relation to Ps. 110:4 (λέγει). Thus the two appointments are not necessarily effected simultaneously. We suggest, therefore, that at 1:5, in quoting Ps. 2:7 (and indeed 2 Sam. 7:14 // 1 Chronicles 17:13), our author is exploiting well-known Christological 'texts' to make his own point, that is to emphasize Christ's God-given character as Son. We would agree with Moffatt that when "we ask what [the writer] meant by σήμερον we are asking a question which was not present to his mind"⁵⁸. His main purpose at this point was to underline that God does undoubtedly own Christ as his Son. In the context in which our author uses this verse, 'today' must surely be seen as God's eternal 'now'.

What we have, then, in the prologue (and therefore as a basic feature of the Epistle's whole argument) is an assertion of the supreme and eternal status of God's Son. His was a personal pre-existence. As Snell says, "the thought of his permanent nature as Son of God controls the whole exposition of his saving work: he could do it completely and finally because of who he always was"⁵⁹. That 'saving work' is expounded very much in terms of priesthood and already, in the Epistle's opening statement, the "union of Sonship and Priesthood"⁶⁰ is strongly implied (cf. 1:3).

4.37 The Pattern of Heb. 1:1-4 (the Suffering Servant?)

There is no direct allusion to the Servant figure in Heb. 1:1-4. However it is possible to discern a pattern which might be reminiscent of the Suffering Servant 'schema', i.e. exaltation - humiliation/sin-bearing - vindication. The Son is a glorious figure who nevertheless deigned to make purification for sins, afterwards taking an exalted place at God's right hand. As Lohmeyer has pointed out, this is also very much the pattern of Phil. 2:5-11: "The approach here is the same as in the hymn which Paul quotes; the difference is that it is made more precise in terms of the metaphysical substantiability of Christ"⁶¹. There is another significant difference. If our author were following the "approach" of the Philippians hymn, he has not only expanded and spelled out more clearly the first section, he has also compressed and restated its central portion. There is no reference in Heb. 1:1-4 to Christ's self-emptying, to his taking the form of a slave, to his being made in the likeness of men, to his self-humbling and obedience on the cross. Instead we find the clause, καθαρῶν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιούμενος (1:3)⁶², a notion not to be found in the Philippians hymn. As we read on in the Epistle, it becomes clear that the making of such purification is closely associated with Christ's real humanity, obedience, suffering and death but here in the prologue the emphasis is on the priestly character of his activity. This would suggest that it was this same 'priestly character' which was at the heart of what our author wanted to say about Jesus. To this, other and familiar ideas were added. These may well have included hymnic outlines such as those found in Philippians 2 (connected with the Servant motif?) and Col.

1:15ff. (concerned with Christ as God's Wisdom)⁶³ but the writer of Hebrews has blended them together and used them in a new way. Enough is included to transmit a recognisable echo of what is already sung in worship, but an original theme is introduced. The one who is extolled as Son, heir, new Adam, Wisdom and exalted Lord is he who made purification of sins.

The latter phrase is indeed an unusual one. In the NT the only other instance occurs in what is generally agreed to be a late writing (2 Pet. 1:9). The LXX furnishes us with Job 7:21 (and perhaps Ex. 29:36) but elsewhere (as in the NT) "purification" relates to persons, things and places rather than sins (cf. e.g. Ex.30:10; Lev. 15:13; Neh. 12:45. Not, interestingly in Is. 53. Compare Mk. 1:44 & par.; Lk. 2:22; 5:14; Jn. 2:6; 3:25). Here, in Hebrews,

καθαρισμόν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν could mean the purification of people from sin or, more probably, the removal of sins, as in the healing of a disease (cf. this use of καθάρῃς in Mk. 1:40f. & pars.). We may note as of particular interest that in Ex. 29:36 LXX, the Day of Atonement (of such central significance for the writer of Hebrews) is described as the Day of Purification (τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ). It seems that in Heb. 1:3c our author is already touching not only on the priesthood of the Son but also on his *High*-priesthood and the finality of his atoning work. The aorist participle ποιησάμενος, as Spicq points out⁶⁴, suggests an implicit contrast with the levitical priesthood, which could only continue year by year to effect a temporary purification. The Son has made purification (i.e. dealt with defiling sins) once for all (cf. Heb. 9:25, 26) in an act of great power. As Spicq also discerns, "La purification des péchés est elle aussi une oeuvre de puissance, comme une refoute du cosmos bouleversé par le péché; miracle plus grand que la création du monde et que sa conservation:

ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας --- καθαρισμόν --- ποιησάμενος ⁶⁵

(cf. use of ποιεῖν in Gen. 1). The Son's act of making purification for sins is an act of new creation, a conviction which, as we shall see, pervades much of our author's thinking.

J.T. Sanders, in his study of New Testament Christological hymns⁶⁶, sees in Heb. 1:3 "a confessional hymn of early Christianity, quite similar in some respects to the original behind 1 Tim. iii.16 and 1 Pet. iii.18c f.,22"⁶⁷. These

do indeed express the vindication and exaltation of Christ, 1 Pet. 3:22 by means of reference to Ps. 110:1 and perhaps Ps. 8:6, but they contain no obvious indication of either Christ's cosmic significance or his dealing with sin. Even if we take into account 1 Pet. 3:18ab, the 'lead-in' to the suggested hymn-fragment, there is still no clear parallel to Hebrews' καθαρισμόν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιούμενος 1 Peter's Χριστὸς ἁπλῶς περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἡπείθετο ἵνα ὑμᾶς προαγγέλῃ τῷ Θεῷ may well point in a similar direction but it is not using the same explicitly priestly terminology. Again, we have to return to our author's originality in this respect.

4.38 Better than the angels

"Evidence from the Letter to the Hebrews indicates that in the community addressed some were having difficulty separating Christ from other angelic beings."⁶⁸ C. Rowland's verdict would be shared by a number of scholars⁶⁹. R. Longenecker, for instance, feels that "the opening argument of chapters one and two on the supremacy of the Son over angelic ministers seems to point to a distinctive doctrine of redemptive angelology held by the recipients"⁷⁰. That a good deal of attention was paid to angels in the Judaism of the Christian era seems clear enough. We have seen that in some texts, angels are regarded as intercessors⁷¹. Other references suggest that angels were also thought of by some to convey human prayers to God (cf. 1QH6:13, where members of the Community Council, by implication unlike others, are said to enjoy the privilege of direct communication with God; they "share a common lot with the Angels of the Face. And among them shall be no mediator to [invoke thee], and no messenger [to make] reply." See also Tob. 12:12-15; III Baruch 11-17; and compare Matt. 18:10). As Longenecker recognized⁷², the rabbinic attitude to this particular conviction was for the most part cool, stressing the need to call *directly* upon God. It is perhaps important to consider here G.F. Moore's assertion⁷³ (strongly endorsed recently by E.P. Sanders⁷⁴) that angels "in orthodox Judaism... were not intermediaries between man and God." What they were were God's messengers and agents of revelation. This was their primary function in the OT⁷⁵ and, indeed, in Philo who, interestingly, at one point refers to the Logos as "the archangel" and "the elder of the angels"⁷⁶. The

LXX of Deut. 33:2 appears to indicate the emergence of a belief that angels were present at the giving of the Law at Sinai, and by the NT period this belief seems also to involve angelic *mediation* of the Law (cf. Acts 7:53; Gal. 43:19; Heb. 2:2.). Other features of the angelic vocation were apparently membership of the heavenly court (cf., e.g., 1 Kings 22:19-22; Job 1:6; 2:1 LXX) and active participation in the celestial worshipping community (cf., e.g., Job 38:7 LXX, where angels sang praises at the creation of the world; Ps. 103:20; Ps. 148:2; and compare Rev. 5:11; 7:11). Angels were thought to be involved in the government of the world (cf. Dan. 10:13, 20f.), perhaps having specific national responsibilities⁷⁷, and there are also indications of a belief that particular individuals and groups had 'guardian angels' (cf. Gen. 48:16; Ps. 91:11. Compare Matt. 11:10; Acts 12:15; Rev. 1:20; 2:1, 8 etc.).

It would seem that for some Jews angels assumed a more esoteric rôle. The mystic needed to know the precise names of the angels if he were to journey in safety through the spiritual realms to the throne of God's presence⁷⁸. The Essene sectary, according to Josephus, was "carefully to preserve the books of the sect and the names of the angels"⁷⁹. The Qumran covenanters, themselves probably Essenes⁸⁰, were certainly not unaffected by the mystical strand of Judaism (cf. Angelic Liturgy 2:9, where a community member describes his vision of the ministers "of the Glorious Face"). They also held that angels would play a key part in the final struggle between the forces of light and darkness (cf. e.g. 1QM, the War Rule).

As regards early Christian literature, there is clear evidence from post-New Testament writings of the existence of an angelo-morphic Christology, Christ being regarded after the manner of a supreme angel or archangel⁸¹. In the NT itself there may be a hint of this in Gal. 4:14, where Paul reminds his readers that they received him ὡς ἄγγελον θεοῦ — — ὡς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν⁸². Some form of angel *worship* seems to be implied by Col. 2:18 (θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων), interestingly associated with regulations concerning food and holy days, which are described as σκιά τῶν μελλόντων (Col. 2:16, 17). The precise nature of the 'Colossian heresy' is a notable subject of debate⁸³, but it is at least possible that the Christian community here was being drawn towards features of a (sectarian?)

Judaism which stressed the 'holy otherness' of God and the consequent need for protective ritual observances and mediatory aids to worship. Thus Paul had to remind his readers that these things are unnecessary as Christian believers have been raised with Christ in God (cf. Col. 2:20-3:3). The great majority of other references to angels in the NT relate to their 'orthodox' role as messengers, agents and worshippers of God⁸⁴.

What, then, of Hebrews? What aspects of contemporary angelology might seem to be reflected in its argument? We note first that the text gives us no indication that our author was seeking to undermine a belief in angels as intercessors or conveyors of human prayers to God. The reference in 7:25 to Christ's heavenly intercession is set in the midst of a contrast between Jesus' priesthood and that of the Levitical porder. Angels form no part of this scenario. Indeed, as we remarked, the main exposition of Christ's High Priestly character does not involve angels at all. They appear only in the opening section (chap. 1-2) and towards the end of the Epistle (12:22; 13:2). In none of these instances is there any suggestion that the readers were inclined to *worship* angels. It is assumed that the angels are themselves part of the celestial worshipping community (12:22; cf. 1:6). If angel-worship had been a real danger, it would surely "have been condemned explicitly and not by inference"⁸⁵. Our author has no compunction in being open and direct on other points.

There is a clear reference, however, to the notion that angels were involved in mediating the 'old' covenant (2:2) and it is possible to see the Epistle's whole concern about angels in this light. Undoubtedly, one of the Letter's main thrusts is that a new covenant is in force, of which Jesus is the mediator. Our author is at pains to emphasize the absolute supremacy and finality of this new covenant, an aim which requires him to underline heavily the superiority of its mediator in relation to those associated with the giving and operation of the Sinai covenant. Of these, the most prominent in rank were angels and they are therefore considered first (to be followed by Moses, Joshua and Aaron). It is not our author's intention to deny their high status and vocation, for he is certainly in no doubt that 'the word spoken through the angels' (2:2) issued from God. Rather, he seeks to demonstrate in a way

that could hardly be gainsaid the incomparable dignity of the Son, that Son in whom God spoke so as to make possible a full and perfect salvation, a new and eternal covenant. We note that in 2:1-4, which seems to sum up the preceding comparison between Son and angels, ὁ δὲ ἄγγελος λαλήθεις λόγος is parallel to ἐγγέλιον - - - σωτηρίας; ἥτις ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ κυρίου in a context which cannot but suggest a comparison between two covenants. The new covenant of salvation is inaugurated through one who is not only Lord but Son, one who bears the very stamp of God's nature. It can therefore claim an absolute commitment, a claim which is in no way undermined by the necessity for the Son to become for a little while lower than the angels (2:9). Such a state of affairs was no unfortunate accident. It was an essential part of the plan and purpose of God (2:10ff.).

At 1:7 our author quotes from Ps. 103:4 LXX⁸⁶, describing angels as winds/spirits and as a flame of fire. In view of 1:8, he would seem to be contrasting the impermanent (and impersonal?) character of the angels with the permanent (and personal) character of the Son. Might he not also be evoking the cosmic phenomena which accompanied the promulgation of the Law at Sinai⁸⁷ (cf. 12:18-20, 29), thus bringing to mind that belief concerning angels which he is to make explicit at 2:2? It would not be unlike our author to introduce somewhat indirectly what he is later to focus on directly (cf. the notion of Christ's High priesthood)⁸⁸. As we have said, it is a matter of preparing the ground, a characteristic of our author's teaching method. In the same way, it only becomes clear at 2:3 that in being sent forth to serve those who are to inherit salvation (1:14), the angels have in fact been brought into the service of the new covenant. Their rôle did not cease with the abrogation of the old order. They are still very much used by God in service (1:14) and as agents of divine visitation (13:2). They are also members of that community dwelling in "heavenly Jerusalem" (12:22) but it is important to notice here that it is another resident, Jesus, who is described as "mediator of a new covenant" (12:24). The angels have their place, then, but it in no way compares with the place of supreme honour and dignity occupied by the Son. By contrast with the angels, the Son sits by invitation at God's right hand (1:13) and it is to him rather than to the angels that God subjects "the world to come" (2:5)⁸⁹.

It would seem, therefore, that our author's attitude to angels can be understood largely in terms of (a) 'orthodox' Jewish angelology (God's messengers, covenantal mediators and worshippers) and (b) the need to set forward Christ's superior credentials as mediator of a new covenant. Of esoteric or proto-gnostic angelology there is little, if any, sign. Indeed, D.M. Hay's comment about Melchizedek might also be applied to this area: "The marvel is not that the author has made so much out of so little but that he has made so little out of so much"³⁰. If his main concern was to counter an approach which stressed the intermediary role of angels as standing between man and God, we should have expected a far more obvious and firm treatment of the subject. As it is, there is only one brief reference in his opening statement about the Son and the angels which could possibly be construed in this light.

At 1:4, the Son is said to have inherited a more excellent (powerful?)³¹ name than the angels. This is clearly a matter of some importance for our author, as he places ὄνομα in an emphatic position at the end of the clause - indeed, at the end of his first magisterial sentence (1:1-4). What then does he understand by 'name'? There is no indication at any point in the Epistle that the 'name' is to be used as a 'password' or protective device in a hazardous journey through the heavens - neither is there any polemic against such a use. Drawing near to the throne of grace - coming boldly into God's presence - is connected with confidence in the person and work of Jesus, not with any 'mystical' knowledge of his secret name (cf., e.g., 4:14-16; 10:19-22). It is perhaps more helpful to interpret ὄνομα in 1:4 in its more usual Jewish sense of nature or character³². The name reveals the person³³. Knowing the name opens up some kind of relationship³⁴. Conferring the name is associated with the possession of authority³⁵. In Hebrews the 'name' referred to would appear to be 'Son' (cf. 1:5ff.). This name is 'inherited' (κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα - note perfect tense). Though certainly affirmed by God (cf. 1:5) it is nevertheless possessed as of 'hereditary' right. It points to the inherent character of Christ and his special relationship with God, underlining the great difference in status between Christ and the angels. That difference applies both to the Son's eternal nature and to his 'post-incarnation' exaltation. So the burden of 1:4 is, in Farrar's words, that "Christ, regarded as Agent or Minister of the

scheme of Redemption, became (γενόμενος) mediatorally superior to the Angel-ministrants of the Old Dispensation, as He always was superior to them in dignity and essence (κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα)⁹⁶. Stress on the "more excellent name" (διαφορώτερον) serves to undergird the claims to validity and superiority of the new and "better" (κρείττονος) covenant which will be expounded more fully later in the letter (cf. 8-10). This covenant was not only enacted on "better" (κρείττοσιν 8:6) promises, it was also mediated by one who became "better" (κρείττων) than the angels, even as he has obtained a more excellent ministry (διαφορωτέρας τέτυχεν λειτουργίας) than that of the former priesthood (see 8:6, noting similarity of construction with 1:4)⁹⁷.

At 2:16 we read οὐ γὰρ δήπου ἀγγέλων ἐπιλαμβάνεται . If we were to accept the patristic interpretation of the verb here, i.e. 'to appropriate the nature of'⁹⁸, we might perhaps suspect that our author is correcting some kind of angelomorphic Christology. However the dominant biblical usage of the verb tells against such a translation. Apart from 1 Tim. 6:12, which does imply appropriation, the other N.T. instances have the sense of 'taking hold of', either literally or figuratively, whether to harm or to help - the purpose being supplied by the context (so Matt. 14:31; Lk. 9:47; 20:20; Acts 21:30). At Heb. 8:9 our author uses the verb again in a quotation from Jer. 38:32 LXX, where God is said to have taken the fathers by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. It is surely this figurative use (God acting to save) that the writer also has in mind at 2:16, particularly as the context is the deliverance of "all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage" (2:15). We should note also the use of the *present* tense of the verb in 2:16, which militates against its referring to the historical fact of the incarnation, inviting comparison rather with δύναται - - - βοηθῆσαι in 2:18. Christ ministers saving help *now*. A further point to bear in mind is the unlikelihood of the plural ἀγγέλων in 2:16 if the phrase was meant as a denial that Christ took the form of an angel. Being made like his brethren in every respect (2:17) was a necessary condition of his saving help because it was those 'brethren' who needed salvation, not, of course, (δήπου 2:16), the angels.

Nevertheless, the whole tenor of 1:4-14 might just suggest that the community addressed was in danger of placing Jesus in an 'angelic category'. If an excessive 'exaltation spirituality' was making them hesitant about the true status of Jesus in relation to God, it might have seemed safer to regard him as an honoured angel. This would avoid the risk of going against God's claim to exclusive allegiance, for in Judaism angels were an acceptably 'orthodox' feature of God's activity. It would also mean that they could turn their attention away from the scandal of Jesus' human suffering. A. Schlatter's comment is perhaps particularly apt here:- "To think of Christ without the 'flesh' was attractive not only to the Greek but also to the Jewish mind. Jewish angelology in particular easily led to such a notion. Angels appear in human form, looking exactly as men, yet they have no flesh and never become man. Was it not more dignified to have a Christ who, even in his earthly manifestation, had retained his heavenly nature unimpaired, than one who had to eat, sleep, suffer, and die, and whose mental and spiritual life was limited accordingly?"⁹⁹

If our author was aware of an attitude such as this, he deals with it decisively in his opening two chapters. Using a series of scriptural quotations which would no doubt have been familiar to his readers (either simply from their Jewish background or from Christian applications encountered "in sermons and in the context of worship"¹⁰⁰), he sets aside with almost dismissive gestures the possibility that Christ could have been merely an angel (1:4-14). Christ is God's Son, to whom the angels themselves owe worship (1:5-6). The angels are created agents of God the Creator (1:7, 14), but the Son is he through whom God effected his creation and who enjoys an eternal God-given sovereignty (1:8-13). In view of all this, he says in effect, there is really 'no contest'.

Yet, our author also makes it very plain that the exalted Son of God had to become for a time lower than the angels and experience the suffering of death (2:9). Indeed it was only *because of* (διὰ τὸ πάθος) this suffering that he in his humanity (ἡμεῖς) was "crowned with glory and honour" (2:9). This was "fitting", for only by such a process could man be saved and brought to the glory for which God always intended him (2:10). For

salvation to be complete and completely effective, there had to be a real identification with man and the weakness of his condition (2:17, 18) as well as the operation of the power of God (1:2). In Jesus, both these requirements are fulfilled (2:9, accepting the reading $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\tau\iota\ \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ ¹⁰¹). Our author, therefore, would have agreed with the medieval hymn-writer that God "sent no angel to our race"¹⁰². An angel could not have brought about that great salvation wrought by God in one who is eternally Son (1:2-3c) but who nevertheless submitted to be made mortal man (2:17).

Another verse which might be relevant in this respect is 2:12a. Here the author quotes Ps. 21 (22):22 but instead of $\delta\iota\gamma\gamma\acute{\omicron}\sigma\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ as in the LXX, he uses $\lambda\pi\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\hat{\omega}$ in the phrase "I will announce thy name to my brethren". It may be that this is a subtle reinforcement of the argument that it is Jesus rather than the angels who communicates the nature and character ("name") of God. It is Jesus who is God's supreme "messenger" because, in a very powerful sense, he himself is the message (cf. 1:2a - $\epsilon\lambda\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\gamma\sigma\epsilon\nu\ \epsilon\nu\ \upsilon\iota\hat{\omega}$), bearing the very stamp of God's nature (1:3b).

If, however, the community addressed in Hebrews was succumbing to the attractions of an angelomorphic Christology, it was but part of a wider and deeper problem. It was symptom rather than cause - in need of "treatment", certainly, but something more radical was required to deal with the source of the trouble, together with its other effects. So, in the first two chapters, our author issues a corrective to any tendency to see Christ in angelic terms, a corrective he does not deem it necessary to repeat¹⁰³. Yet even here the comparison between Christ and the angels is but part of a more comprehensive programme, designed to open up the fundamental area of the nature and function of Jesus, with all its crucial consequences for the Christian vocation.

4.39 1:1-4 - Conclusions

The concentrated opening sentence of Hebrews brings together a whole range of Christological ideas, most of which would already be common currency in the community addressed, though we may doubt whether the recipients had heard them interconnected in quite this way before. Certainly few other N.T. sentences could rival the concise accumulation of Christological ideas found in the Hebrews prologue with its "multiplicity of approximations"¹⁰⁴.

Several overall points should be noted:-

- a) God is the main subject of the entire opening statement, a fact which should not be neglected when considering the Son who dominates the subordinate clauses.
- b) The notion of Christ's priesthood is already hinted at in such a way as to prepare for what follows and to bring it into close association with a number of other ways of understanding the person and work of Jesus. He who is Son, prophet, heir, king, new Adam, Wisdom of God, Servant, better than angels is also he who made purification for sins. Thus from the outset priesthood is intimately linked with a variety of other categories of interpretation.
- c) The emphasis is on the exalted status of the Son, both before and after his having made purification for sins.
- d) The way in which the sentence is expressed, with its powerful rhetoric and poetic phraseology (related to use of hymns and/or hymn-patterns?), readily excites a response of awe, praise and worship.
- e) As we have already begun to see, points made in the prologue are frequently carried over into the main body of the text and there developed.

We suggest, therefore, that the opening sentence of Hebrews is of seminal importance and should be kept in mind in any examination of the rest of the Epistle.

4.4 1:5-14

These verses underline the supremacy of the Son over the angels, highlighting his special relationship with God and his rôle in respect of the created order. They are in many ways consequential upon the opening sentence and reinforce its impact. They also continue the process of setting before the readers that comprehensive and 'synthetic' Christology which is to find its focal expression in the concept of Christ's High priesthood.

To make his point, our author uses a catena of scriptural quotations, mainly from the psalms. All of them are taken as spoken by God, to or of the Son or of the angels. It is significant, perhaps, that in this context the angels are not addressed directly by God, for this is a privilege reserved for the Son¹⁰⁵, something which emphasizes his superior status. It has been suggested that these verses reflect the celebration of an enthronement ceremony for the Son¹⁰⁶. Certainly they point to his divinely sanctioned position at God's right hand and the exalted character of his person and work. If there is a particular liturgical setting in mind here, it would give us a specific point of reference for that 'exaltation spirituality' which we have suggested is a basic feature of the Epistle's *Sitz im Leben*. However, in the absence of any firm evidence from the text or from other records of earliest Christianity for a liturgical 'enthronement celebration', such a celebration must remain in the realm of speculation. We have also to account for the fact that a number of the scriptural quotations are used only here in Hebrews¹⁰⁷. Was this due to originality on the part of our author or to a purely circumstantial omission of familiar testimonia from the rest of the N.T.? We shall therefore survey this section of our Epistle to see what is suggested by the text.

4.41 1:5

Verse 5 confronts us with two OT quotations that are by no means exclusive to Hebrews. Psalm 2:7 is quoted explicitly at Acts 13:33 (where it is used in a sermon to emphasize that Jesus is the promised Davidic Messiah) and is possibly alluded to at Lk. 1:32 (the Angel's announcement to Mary; again the 'Davidic connection' is important). It is referred to at Mk.1:11 // Lk.3:22¹⁰⁸ (the words of the heavenly voice at the baptism of Jesus) and Rom. 1:4 (of the seed of David according to the flesh, designated - ὁ υἱοθεύτων Son of God in power... by the resurrection of the dead). The first two verses of the psalm occur at Acts 4:25ff. in a prayer offered by believers after the release of Peter and John, the messianic reference again being evident. It would seem that the second psalm was regarded by early Christians (if not by Jews)¹⁰⁹ as a significant messianic prophecy and this may well have been the case with the community addressed by Hebrews. The Epistle's author, however, appears to use it in a somewhat different sense. There is no mention of messianic status or lineage, no attempt to prove or recollect that Jesus is the Christ. Our author would undoubtedly accept the messiahship of Jesus - cf. his use of Ps. 110:1, his stress on the Son's kingship, his possibly titular use of ὁ Χριστός at 5:5; 9:28; 11:26¹¹⁰ - but for him this was not the basic issue. Rather, he felt it imperative to show that Jesus, whilst still being God's Christ, was also God's Son in a way that linked him intimately with God's very being and put him in a higher category than even the angels. Ps. 2:7 admirably suited this purpose. The emphatic positions of υἱός and ἐγὼ make abundantly clear in the context of our Epistle the God-given character of Christ's sonship. That divine sonship, as we have argued above¹¹¹, our author believed to be of the order of eternity. It did not begin with the Lord's earthly existence and ministry or with his post-Resurrection exaltation. It was integral to the life of God.

In view of this, it may be that our writer found particular significance in Ps. 2:7's use of the verb γεννάω. Christ's sonship is not merely by divine appointment, it is not by adoption, it is rather the result of a divine begetting from eternity (σήμερον¹¹²), issuing from the person of God himself (cf. ὁ υἱός -- χαράκτηρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ).

1:3). Thus our author may be standing against attitudes closely associated in the 'popular' Christian mind with this psalm verse, attitudes perhaps hinted at, though not necessarily espoused by other N.T. writers¹¹³ - that Christ became God's Son either at his birth (cf. Lk. 1:35) or at his baptism (cf. Mk. 1:11 // Lk. 3:22) or his resurrection (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4). The birth, says the writer of Hebrews, is far more profound. Recalling that 1:5-14 consists in a comparison between the Son and the angels¹¹⁴ (rather than a statement of messianic qualifications), we notice with interest that at v. 7 angels are said to be *made* by God (ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ --). Ποιεῖν is the verb of creation (cf. Gen. 1:1, 7, 16, 21, 25, 26, 27, 31; 2:2 etc.; Ex. 20:11; Ps. 103:24; Ps. 145:6 - all LXX; Matt. 19:4; Acts 4:24; 14:15; 17:24, 26; Heb. 1:2, [Rev. 21:5]). Ps. 103 LXX, from which Heb. 1:7 is a quotation, is a psalm extolling God the *Creator*. The angels, then, are *created* by God (and therefore, by implication, through the agency of the Son - Heb. 1:2). Moreover, the present tense of the psalm (and some Jewish tradition¹¹⁵) would suggest that they are 'continuously created'. The Son, by contrast, *has been* 'begotten' (γεγέννηκα) by God and remains (1:3), unchangeably (1:12), the ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτῆρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ (1:3)¹¹⁶. This contrast in origin is further strengthened if, as we shall argue below¹¹⁷ εἰσαγάγῃ εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην in 1:6 is to be thought of in terms of *birth* imagery.

The second quotation in 1:5 reinforces what is communicated by the first. "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son" (2 Sam. 7:14 // 1 Chron. 17:13)¹¹⁸. The emphasis is again on God's recognition of his Son and their special relationship, rather than on a purely messianic interpretation¹¹⁹. There seems little doubt that 2 Sam. 7:14 (indeed vv. 12-16) constituted a significant 'testimonium' for early Christianity. The 'ingredients' (Davidic descent, the 'raising' of David's seed, sonship, God's promise of an everlasting dynasty, kingdom and throne), if not the exact words, may well be reflected in Lk. 1:32f. and Acts 13:33f. and we remember that both of these passages have connections with Ps. 2:7. They also relate the prophecy to a period *after* Christ's birth. The more direct application of 2 Sam. 7:14 in 2 Cor. 6:18 and Rev., 21:7 is to believers rather than Christ and here there is a present or a future reference. From a Jewish point of view, a messianic

interpretation of 2 Sam. 7:14 is attested in 4Q Florilegium 1:10-13, where, regarding the text under review, the commentator explains, "He is the shoot of David who stands with the interpreter of the Torah, who [...] in Zifon in] the end of days... who will arise to save Israel"²⁰. Our author, however, at this point makes no explicit mention of Christ's Davidic descent²¹. His use of material like 2 Sam. 7:14 in such a 'detached' way may well suggest that, whilst assuming the Son's messianic lineage, the writer was seeking, as in so much of the rest of his argument, to impress upon his readers the principle of 'how much more'. Jesus is not only the promised Messiah, he is also, and more fundamentally, the eternal Son of God.

4.42 1:6

That Son is, by God's command, worshipped by angels (1:6). But when, and in what context? The author's firm statement clearly indicates that for him the answer to that question was self-evident. Not so, unfortunately, for us. Several suggestions have been made by modern scholars, the more popular among them being that this verse refers to the human birth of the Son (so, e.g., Narborough, J. Moffatt, Spicq), to his resurrection/exaltation (F.F. Bruce), or to his second advent (F.W. Farrar, C.J. Vaughan, Westcott). At first sight, the proximity of *πάλιν* to *εἰσαγάγει* might in itself suggest a reference to the Parousia (i.e. "when he re-introduces the firstborn into the world"), but grammatically, the *πάλιν* of v. 6 is most probably "rhetorically transferred [and] answers to the *πάλιν* of v. 5"²². So we should read, "and again, when...". The overall construction of the sentence is no more helpful in pointing us to a definite contextual reference. In the temporal clause we find an aorist subjunctive (*εἰσαγάγει*) and in the main clause a present indicative (*λέγει*). According to Moulton-Turner, the use of *ὅταν* with the aorist subjunctive usually implies "a definite action taking place in the future but concluded before the action of the main verb"²³. Such a principle could be applied, with suitable modifications, to support any of the three interpretations outlined above²⁴. Heb. 10:5 might be thought to provide a fruitful comparison - *Διὸ ἐπισπρόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον λέγει* - and in this passage the setting is clearly Christ's incarnation. However, we must notice that here the word employed for 'world' is

κόσμος rather than οἰκουμένη as in 1:6. This difference may well be of some importance for our understanding of the text in chapter 1.

Οἰκουμένη generally carries the meaning of the inhabited earth (cf. Acts 19:27; Lk. 4:5; Rev. 12:9)¹²⁵ or the Greek or Roman world (cf. Lk. 2:1; Acts 11:28)¹²⁶. If this is its sense in Heb. 1:6, then a reference to incarnation or Parousia would surely be implied. We have to take into account, however, the noun's other occurrence in our epistle at 2:5 (τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν, περὶ ἧς λαλοῦμεν). Here the author seems to have in mind the new age inaugurated by Jesus (2:9, cf. 1:2a), that environment of 'glory' (2:10) inhabited by 'many sons', the "assembly of the first-born", as well as "myriads of angels" (12:22), at once a present reality and a future goal (12:22, cf. 12:1f.). To look at οἰκουμένη in this light at 1:6 points us to an interesting possibility. 2:5 suggests that the writer is already speaking of "the world to come" (περὶ ἧς λαλοῦμεν). If this is the case back at 1:6 then the verse could be seen as referring to the 'birth' of the Son into the new order, the new creation, not at some future eschatological event (the Second coming) but by means of the whole "Jesus event", i.e. in the experience, human ministry, death and exaltation of the Son (as in 2:9, 10). Thus, he who has been "begotten" from eternity (1:5) is "born" by divine act into the new age as ὁ πρωτότοκος, as head of a redeemed creation, as new Adam (1:6).

The verb εἰσαγεῖν does incorporate birth as one of its meanings¹²⁷. We may note as of particular interest an example from 1 Clement which has God as its subject: ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ σκοτεινῶν ὁ πλάσας ἡμᾶς καὶ δημιουργήσας εἰσήγαγεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον αὐτοῦ, προετοιμάσας τὰς εὐεργεσίας αὐτοῦ πρὶν ἡμᾶς γεννηθῆναι¹²⁸. Here the reference is entry by God's agency into the first creation (κόσμος, cf. its use in Heb. 4:3; 9:26; 10:5 and, with clear indications of the world's imperfections, at 11:7, 38). At Heb. 1:6, no doubt in a linkage of ideas with the 'begetting' of the Son in v. 5, the thought is of his being brought to birth (painfully, as 2:9, 10 make clear) into the οἰκουμένη, that world in which God's purposes are (and will be) perfectly fulfilled for all its inhabitants. It is the world of the new

covenant, the new creation, and is characterised by the citizenry of "heavenly Jerusalem" (12:22ff.). It is the world longed for by God and with which, according to some OT writers, he has formerly been fruitlessly in travail²⁹. In bringing his Son into this οἰκουμένη he has now successfully given birth.

The angel inhabitants of this οἰκουμένη are bidden in chapter 1 to worship "the firstborn", an obvious shift in emphasis from both the OT passages which may have supplied our author's quotation (Deut. 32:43 LXX³⁰; Ps. 97(96):7 LXX) where God is the object of veneration. That worship due to God can be validly directed to Jesus as God's Son is one of the significant implications of Heb. 1:1-4, for the opening statements of the Epistle declare the intimate connection of the Son with the life of God himself. In worshipping the Son one is not worshipping someone other than God - a reassurance that was perhaps important for the community addressed by Hebrews. In the verse under consideration, however, it is angels who are called upon to offer their praises to one who is described as ὁ πρωτότοκος. Here alone in the NT is the latter phrase used absolutely. Indeed, it is significant that nowhere in his Epistle does our author refer to angels as 'sons', though there would have been strong LXX precedents for his doing so (e.g. in the quotation under discussion)³¹. The description 'firstborn' is applied to Jesus at Lk. 2:7 ("her firstborn son"), Rom. 8:29 ("firstborn among many brethren"), Col. 1:15, 18 ("firstborn of all creation", "firstborn from the dead"), and Rev. 1:5 ("the firstborn of the dead"). From these examples, it would seem that Christian usage of the word focussed not so much on a messianic interpretation (as in some rabbinic tradition³²) as on Christ as head both of the first creation (so Col. 1:15, using a 'Wisdom' model) and of the new creation (shown forth in his resurrection, so Rom. 8:29, Col. 1:18 and Rev. 1:5). In its latter sense, it is not far removed from 'new Adam' Christology, as we find it, for instance, in 1 Cor. 15. Christ as new Adam is head of the new creation (both in chronological order and in pre-eminence) and in him "many brothers" can find their fulfilment.

It is along these lines that we should understand πρωτότοκος in Heb. 1:6. Christ is head of the οἰκουμένη, the new age. Chap-

ter 2 makes it clear that, as such, he is 'pioneer' (ἀρχηγός) enabling "many sons", his "brethren", to be brought into "glory" (2:10, 11). This connection of ideas is perhaps further reinforced when we recall the Jewish tradition expressed in the 'Life of Adam and Eve' and quoted earlier³³, that at the creation God required the angels to worship Adam. Our author may well have had such a notion in mind. If angelic worship was commanded for the first man, how much more for him who inaugurates the fulfilment of man's glorious destiny and who is, moreover, the eternal ἀπύγκοσμος and Χαρακτήρ of God. It may also be of interest to note that the *Ascension of Isaiah* 11:23f talks of angels "as pouring out their rapture to Christ as He ascends through the successive heavens in which they live"³⁴

Thus the contextual reference of 1:6 is the genesis of the eternally begotten Son into the new age (οἰκουμένη), as new Adam, through the 'travail' of his human ministry, death and exaltation. This 'birth process' is completed when, "because of the suffering of death", Jesus is "crowned with glory and honour" (2:9). It is this celestial 'coronation', we suggest, that, according to our author, provided the immediate setting for the worship of the angels, worship which had also accompanied the Nativity (cf. Lk. 2:13f., though note that here the praise is directed to God), and which continues to be offered in "heavenly Jerusalem" (cf. Rev. 5:11-13; Heb. 12:22ff.). Such a suggestion points us again to the possibility of a liturgical context for our author's choice of quotations. Perhaps, after all, the community listening to his words were engaged in a liturgy celebrating the exaltation and kingship of Christ. It is a possibility to which we shall return.

The continuous character of the angels' worship is also perhaps implied by the λέγει of 17:6. Angels are certainly associated elsewhere in the NT with the Parousia³⁵, though worship is not mentioned specifically as a feature of their rôle at this point - but in Hebrews, where the Second Coming is briefly mentioned (9:28; 10:25), there is no reference at all either to angels or to their work of worship.

4.43 1:7-9

As we have noted above¹³⁶, the main thrust of 1:7 seems to be an underlining by way of contrast with the Son of the impersonal, created (and impermanent?) character of the angels, with perhaps rather more than a hint of their association with the mediation of the old covenant at Sinai. These angels are *λειτουργοί*, or, as 1:14 has it, *λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα*¹³⁷. Christ, too, is later described as *λειτουργός* (Heb. 8:2, cf. *διαφορωτέρως τέτυχεν λειτουργίας* in 8:6) but his ministry is very different from that of the angels. It is a sacerdotal ministry and, in this respect, it is with the human, priestly *λειτουργοί* of the old covenant¹³⁸ that comparison must be made (cf. 8:1-6), not with angels. Our author sees no challenge to the supremacy of Christ's *priesthood* coming from these "ministering spirits". It is their character as God's messengers and covenantal mediators that is the key point at issue.

One decisive measure of angelic inferiority in this regard is their transitoriness as against the eternal status of the Son. To underline this latter, our author turns to two psalm passages not otherwise quoted in the New Testament: Ps. 45:6-7 (Heb. 1:8-9) and Ps. 102:25-27 (Heb. 1:10-12). Both of these passages raise intriguing Christological questions, prime among them being whether our author is proclaiming the Son as God. His use of Ps. 45:6a (*Ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ Θεός εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος*) might at first sight suggest an affirmative answer. Closer inspection, however, reveals a problematic ambiguity. Is *ὁ Θεός* nominative or vocative? Grammatically, either is possible, producing the opportunity for several radically different translations¹³⁹. If, therefore, we are to come to any conclusion on *our author's* understanding of the phrase, we must draw upon more than grammar. We must attempt to set this psalm quotation in the broader context of the Epistle's theological stance. In view of what the writer says elsewhere, is it likely that he would have identified the Son with God?

Scholars are sharply divided on this issue, at times expressing in microcosm radically divergent interpretations of the Epistle as a whole¹⁴⁰. Buchanan, for example, who does not accept that Hebrews sets forth the

divinity of Christ, sees Ps. 45:6a, as used in this Epistle, in terms of the eternity of *God's throne*, upon which the Messiah would sit¹⁴¹. He cites 1 Chron. 29:23 which, in the Hebrew version, has Solomon sitting on the *Lord's* throne. "Solomon ruled over God's kingdom when he ruled over Palestine, and he sat on God's throne when he ruled from Jerusalem"¹⁴². However, we have no firm evidence that the author of our Epistle was familiar with the Hebrew language, and the LXX of 1 Chron. 29:23 has Solomon sitting "upon the throne of his father David". It is thus difficult to argue convincingly that our author is interpreting the Christological sense of Ps. 45:6a in the light of the Chronicles verse. Buchanan is perhaps on firmer ground when he points to the strongly attested reading $\alpha \upsilon \tau \omicron \upsilon$ ¹⁴³ in the second phrase of Hebrews' quotation from the psalm (-- - $\rho \acute{\alpha} \beta \delta \omicron \varsigma \tau \eta \varsigma \beta \alpha \sigma \iota \lambda \epsilon \acute{\iota} \alpha \varsigma$ $\alpha \upsilon \tau \omicron \upsilon$, cf LXX -- - σου). Accepting this reading, it is possible to argue that our author wants us to understand that *two* figures are involved here - God (addressed in the vocative in the first line) and the Messiah (referred to in the second line as possessing a kingdom - presumably by God's gift). Thus Christ is being proclaimed, not as God, but as exalted messianic king, and the author of Hebrews has modified his psalm quotation to make this clear.

However, even accepting this reading, it could equally be argued that the writer is seeking to stress his conviction that Messiah's throne is indeed to be *identified* with God's throne, Messiah's kingdom with God's kingdom. The second line of the psalm then becomes almost a reinforcing editorial parenthesis, felt necessary, perhaps, because of the author's bold and novel use of the psalm. So, in effect.-

'Thy throne, O God is for ever and ever

(and the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of his kingdom)'.

This would in fact make more sense of the resumption of a direct form of address, which seems quite clearly to refer to the Son:-

'Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness...'

Nonetheless, in literary, if not theological terms, the smoothest and most satisfying reading is that which assumes a common addressee throughout the quoted verses of the psalm; and it is perhaps important to recall that our author is not only theologian but also skilled literary stylist¹⁴⁴. The opening formulae of 1:5, 6, 7 & 8 do after all, suggest that it is *God* who is doing the speaking and that in what he says he is referring either to the angels or to the Son. So in 1:8, the most straightforward interpretation, stylistically speaking, of *πρὸς δὲ τὸν Υἱόν, Ὁ Θρόνος σου ὁ Θεὸς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος* is that God is addressing the Son as *ὁ Θεὸς* ¹⁴⁵ (and indeed that he continues to do so in the latter part of the psalm quotation).

Is this really a possibility *theologically*, whatever the literary considerations? Our exegesis of the first chapter of Hebrews thus far suggests that the writer would have no reticence in perceiving and describing the Son as *ὁ Θεὸς*. That Son has already been presented not only as heir of all things and agent and sustainer of creation but also as *ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης [του Θεου] καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ* (1:2-3)¹⁴⁶. It is surely not such an unthinkable step from here to explicit divine nomenclature - particularly if the initial context is one of adoration (cf. Thomas' worshipping response to the risen Christ at Jn. 20:28 *Ὁ Κύριός μου καὶ ὁ Θεός μου*). Certain apprehensions may be expressed more readily in worship than in formal doctrine and this may well be the background to our author's use of Ps. 45.6f.

As C.F.D. Moule points out¹⁴⁷, two of the most powerful influences on the development of Christological terminology were "the demands of adoration and worship" and the Psalter. The two frequently came together¹⁴⁸ and, for our author, such is probably the case here. Certainly in vv. 10-12 of chapter 1 he has no compunction in applying to the Son "a great act of adoration to God as Creator... daringly lifted from Ps. cii."¹⁴⁹. Indeed, the whole opening section of the Epistle (1:1-13) is such as to excite that worship with reverence and awe which the writer so strongly commends at the end of chapter 12 (v. 28). For him, such worship must be thoroughly 'God-centred'. What place, then, for the Jesus who had made such a comprehensive personal impact, who could be

described as τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν (13:20, cf. use of κύριος at 2:3; 7:14) and τὸν ποιμένα τῶν προβάτων τὸν μέγαν (13:20), descriptions already used in Judaism of Yahweh himself⁵⁰? It seems abundantly clear from the NT generally that Christians found themselves acclaiming Jesus in terms which, in effect, made him an 'object' of worship (cf. e.g. Jn. 20:28; Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 1:15-20; Rev. 5:11-14; 7:9-10). For those with a background of strict, Jewish monotheism this must have sooner or later raised fundamental questions. How could the realities of spiritual and devotional experience be reconciled with the demands of doctrinal monotheism? Who indeed was this Jesus who had taken hold of them so radically? We do these early Jewish Christians a grave injustice when we underestimate the creative (and perhaps at times destructive) power of this tension between experience and theology⁵¹. The encountering of hardship and opposition would, no doubt, make questioning more acute and so it may have been with the recipients of our Epistle, a situation which perhaps underlies those strongly expressed hortatory sections which give such a note of crucial urgency to the whole work (cf. e.g. 3:12-4:16; 6:1-11; 10:19-39; 13:12-17). Evidently for these folk the first flush of enthusiasm had passed (cf. 10:32-36) and hard realities were now having a dangerously undermining influence. 'Was Jesus really worthy of worship and allegiance?' had become far more than an academic question. It had to do with their very survival.

For our author, too, the question must have been of great importance. The answer he perceived shows all the characteristics of that 'boldness' he urged upon his readers. It was an answer which, for him, preserved the unity and centrality of God (so dominant in his exposition) whilst at the same time allowing a proper place to the significance of Jesus (also a major ingredient of his Epistle). It was an answer which linked God and Jesus together *ontologically*. God has spoken, and therefore acted, in one who is Son - a Son, moreover, who can be described in terms used in (late) Judaism of the personified activity of God (Heb. 1:1-3)⁵². In this kind of context, it is not at all surprising that our author should perceive this Son as ὁ Θεός. Grammatically, it is possible; stylistically, it is the most satisfying reading; theologically, it is consistent with the understanding of Christ set forth in the Epistle's foundational opening chapter, an understanding which, arguably, permeates the

whole work. This being so, it becomes possible to interpret the second $\delta \Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ of the psalm quotation as a vocative addressed to the Son. So N.E.B.: "therefore, O God, thy God has set thee above thy fellows"¹⁵³.

Who were these 'fellows' ($\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{o}\chi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$)? Angels? (So Héring ¹⁵⁴). Christians? (So F.F. Bruce¹⁵⁵). Both? (So Vanhoye¹⁵⁶). And why, if our author was concerned solely to emphasize the eternal status of the Son, did he take the trouble of quoting Ps. 45 beyond v. 6a? There are, in fact, a number of interesting ingredients in the rest of the quotation, the significance of $\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{o}\chi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ being but one. Others include the act of anointing ('God has anointed thee with the oil of gladness'), the moral character of the addressee ('Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness') and his kingly status ('the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of his kingdom'). L.C. Allen, in a study of our author's use of Ps. 45:7¹⁵⁷, argues that all these ingredients, plus the motif of eternity, were part of the process of preparation undertaken by the writer for his later explicit proclamation of the royal, Melchizedekian priesthood of Christ. So, Allen writes, "The author may well have intended an anticipation of Melchizedek whose priesthood was perennial and whose name by popular etymology means *basileus dikaiosynes*, king of righteousness (7:2).... For the author the royal, righteous and eternal Son of Hebrews would hardly have failed to suggest the Melchizedek type priesthood"¹⁵⁸. His use of Ps. 45:6-7, therefore, is part of a gradual "edging towards" the detailed treatment of Christ's high priesthood which lies at the heart of the Epistle¹⁵⁹. It is true, certainly, that one can discern in Heb. 1:8-9 echoes or hints of the characteristics of Melchizedek's royal priesthood as set out in Gen. 14 and Ps. 110. How far this is regarded as part of our author's *conscious intention* will depend largely on how we perceive his manner of writing more generally. If we accept that his overall *theological* argument is characterised, amongst other things, by a subtle suggestiveness¹⁶⁰, then it will not be thought too fanciful to ascribe to our author an awareness of those 'idea links' which seem implicit in much of his writing, including the passage presently under discussion. He knew what he was doing.

Perhaps another reason for choosing Ps. 45 at this point (rather than Gen. 14 or Ps. 110:4) was its underlying association with other and possibly

more immediately acceptable, Christological thinking. Whether or not Ps. 45 was regarded messianically by Christians at this time is difficult to establish¹⁶¹ but it is possible to see a connection of ideas between that part of the psalm quoted by Hebrews and, for instance, the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, the beginning of which, at one point in the NT at least, is taken as pointing to Jesus as Messiah¹⁶². Thus we have

- a) the notion of 'anointing' (Is. 61.1; Ps. 45.7; ἔχρισεν in both;
- b) a dominant note of joy and gladness (Is. 61.3, 'oil of joy', ἔλειμμα εὐφροσύνης; 61.11, the Lord causing 'exultation', ἡγαλλίαμα, before all nations; Ps. 45:7, ἔλαιον ἡγαλλιάσεως : and
- c) an emphasis on righteousness (esp. Is. 61.8, 'I am the Lord who love righteousness', ὁ ἀγαπᾷ δικαιοσύνην 'and hate robberies of injustice', μισῶν ἑρπύγματα ἐφ' ἀδικίας Ps. 45:7 ἀγάπησας δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἐμίσησας ἀνομίαν).

The parallel would be even closer if we took the view that our author understood the first ὁ Θεός of Ps. 45:6 as a vocative addressed to the Son. We may, perhaps, also note with interest that Is. 61:10 uses bridegroom/bride imagery (cf. the context of the psalm as a whole). In fact, the only major theme of the psalm quotation not reflected in Is. 61 is that of kingship.

If we accept that Hebrews was written for Jewish Christians who knew their scriptural heritage, then we should perhaps also accept that they were at least as likely to recognise 'echoes' of other passages as Gentile scholars many centuries later, particularly if those other passages had already been taken up in familiar Christian teaching. So, the quotation of Ps. 45:7 may well have stirred up in the consciousness of the addressees their profession of Jesus as 'the Christ', 'the Anointed One', the one who had been anointed to realize the righteous purposes of God, as prophesied in scriptures like Is. 61¹⁶³, the one who was messianic king, even, perhaps, the one who was bridegroom. It has also been suggested (notably by Spicq¹⁶⁴ and Vanhoye¹⁶⁵) that our author was linking in not only to particular descriptions of Christ

but also to a particular way of presenting the significance of his person and mission, i.e. the pattern of humiliation/exaltation. Such a pattern appears deeply ingrained in NT preaching and teaching¹⁶⁶ and we have already detected its presence in the Prologue to our Epistle¹⁶⁷. Like Vanhoye¹⁶⁸, we shall discern it elsewhere in our author's presentation. Here, it is argued, the pattern emerges in Heb. 1:9. The 'passion' element is to be found in the first phrase, "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness". The aorist tenses speak clearly of completed action and the action itself suggests the earthly vocation of the Messiah, incorporating as it does those qualities 'traditionally associated' with the Messiah's coming. The δὲ τούτῳ which introduces the next phrase Spicq compares with the δὲ of Phil. 2:9¹⁶⁹ (δὲ καὶ ὁ Θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν) - earthly experience leads to heavenly exaltation, characterised at this point in Hebrews by anointing with the oil of gladness, a celestial "festive anointing"¹⁷⁰ which celebrates (in a way marked liturgically by the Christian community?) the successful completion of the Son's redemptive mission¹⁷¹. We might further suggest that Heb. 1:8 (particularly on the interpretation we have put forward above) fills out the pattern by alluding to that kingly glory enjoyed by the divine Son not just after the Resurrection but throughout eternity. We would then have a picture of glory - passion - exaltation, as in Phil. 2:6-11, but expressed in a rather different way (as we have argued is the case in Heb. 1:1-3). Our author, indeed, seems to be something of a specialist in evoking well-known themes and incorporating them into what is a 'pioneering' theological approach. Here in vv. 8 & 9 he may well be deliberately echoing familiar ideas (though perhaps by using an unfamiliar Christian testimonium) which had come to him in his own experience of worship and reflection, and he is doing so in such a way as to help prepare the ground for the reception of something decidedly new, i.e. the notion of the Melchizedekian high priesthood of Christ. It is part of his purpose to convince his readers that this Christological understanding draws together a whole range of existing perceptions.

4.44 1:10-12

The καί at the beginning of v. 10 alerts us to the fact that what is about to be said is still πρὸς τὸν Υἱόν (v. 8) as against πρὸς -- τοὺς ἄγγέλους (v. 7)¹⁷². And what is about to be said again reflects that theological παρρησία which we have already identified as being characteristic of our author. The quotation presented to us in vv. 10-12 is from a psalm which is unequivocally addressed to God as Creator (Ps. 102:25-27; LXX Ps. 101: LXX Ps. 101:26-28), yet which is undoubtedly applied here to the Son. The word κύριος seems to have provided the early Christians with a suitably honorific, and theologically ambiguous, mode of address for one whom they could not but hold in highest honour¹⁷³ and, as C.F.D. Moule reminds us, "the distinction between κύριος meaning God and κύριος Ἰησοῦς was rapidly blurred"¹⁷⁴. In Hebrews, there is surprisingly little use of the term κύριος in description of Christ and where it does occur (1:10; 2:3; 7:14; 13:20) it is usually in a context where the validity of its application is taken for granted (so 2:3, διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου; 7:14, ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν; 13:20, τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν). Elsewhere, ὁ κύριος is used of the person of God (7:21; 8:2, 8, 9, 10, 11; 10:16, 30; 12:5, 6, 14?; 13:6?). All the more interesting, then, that at 1:10 we are given to understand that God himself, as it were, 'redirects' words addressed to him as Κύριε to the Son. Indeed, throughout the whole of chapter 1, it is as if we are being 'deluged' with evidence that God himself endorses the exalted, not to say, divine status of his Son. Are we meant, then, to conclude that "our Lord Jesus" is, on the highest authority, worthy of praise and worship? And is the emphatic underlining of this truth meant to dismiss as misguided and dangerous the doubts that had arisen on this issue in the community with which our Epistle is concerned?

Certainly if 1:8-12 are to be taken as spoken by God of the Son (and this is surely the most likely reading) our author has set out on the path away from ambiguity. πρὸς δὲ τὸν Υἱόν
 'Ο Θρόνος σου ὁ Θεὸς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος -- καί
 Σὺ κατ' ἄρχάς, Κύριε, τὴν γῆν ἐθεμελίωσας --
 With God's full approval
 (indeed example), Jesus can be called not only ὁ Υἱός but also ὁ Κύριος with

its *divine* connotations, and even, ὁ Θεός. Divinity, eternal rule, responsibility for the creation at the beginning (cf. 1:2, 3) and, by implication at the end (1:12a), changelessness (1:11a, 12c; cf. 13:8) - all these must place Christ in a very different category to all other beings, human or supernatural, angels included¹⁷⁵. Did our author find his perception confirmed or encouraged in the first verse of a psalm which was both familiar and extremely important in his thinking in Ps. 110:1, LXX 111:1? Ἐἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τῷ Κυρίῳ μου - - - . That phrase he never actually quotes but it is arguably implicit in 1:13a, πρὸς τίνα δὲ τῶν ἑγγέλων ἕρμαιέν ποτε, which leads directly into the subsequent words of the psalm, "sit at my right hand..." God's addressing of the Son as Κύριε in 1:10 may also have played a significant part in this linkage of ideas.

4.45 1:13, 14

Already in 1:3 we have had an allusion to a psalm verse that clearly carried great significance for the early Christian community - Ps. 110:1. Now it is quoted directly, at the climax of our author's opening presentation. As with Ps. 2:7, quoted at v. 5, the Epistle's readers would have immediately recognised a familiar testimonium. However, the content and argument of chapter 1 is such as to stimulate a new and adventurous way of looking at the familiar. Ps. 110:1 was particularly useful to early Christianity because its messianic connections meant that its image of session at God's right hand "intrinsically affirmed a continuing relationship between the exalted Christ and God, precluding any possibility of conceiving Christ as a new deity dethroning an older one"¹⁷⁶. When we examine the author's usage of the psalm verse at 1:13 in the context of his whole opening section, it would seem that he is not only subscribing to an accepted 'intrinsic affirmation', he is also proclaiming the divinity of the Christ-figure at God's right hand - not as a rival deity but as the *Χαρακτῆρ* of God's very being (cf. 1:3), whom God can address as Son (v. 5), as God (v. 8, 9) and as Lord (v. 10). It is such a being who sits at God's right hand on an eternal throne (v.8a) and awaits the subjection of his enemies.

By contrast, the angels (all of them, πάντες) are but λειτουργικά πνεύματα , ministering spirits⁷⁷. As they were under the old covenant⁷⁸, so still under the new they are being sent forth (ἀποστελλόμενα) to serve God's people. They thus have a very important function but obviously (or so our author would by this stage have us think) they cannot compete with the superior, not to say supreme, status of the Son.

Chapter 5

Hebrews 1 & 2: an exploration of their message

(2) Hebrews 2:1-9

5:1 Introductory

By the end of Heb. 1, we are left in little doubt that God's Son is worthy of highest honour, for even God can call him 'Lord' (1:10) and 'God' (1:8-9). Is our author, then, confirming the appropriateness of that spirituality of exaltation once so attractive to his community but now being brought into question by adverse external circumstances? The next section of his Epistle makes it clear that the answer cannot be a simple affirmative. Certainly, Christ is intimately linked with the being of God in such a way as to invite worship and praise - but that worship and praise had to recognize and incorporate the Son of God's human experience of temptation, suffering and death with all its significance for his followers. Such was of the essence of the Christian kerygma'. Yet throughout the Christian community this claim must have been a major 'stumbling-block' to both Jewish and Greek converts, for neither would have been entirely comfortable with a God who, to achieve his purposes, deliberately embraced weakness and shame². As C.F.D. Moule has noted, from the evidence we have, the focus of worship in the NT period seems to have been "the 'majesty' rather than the crucifix"³. For the writer of Hebrews it was clearly of great importance to stress that, just as God 'validated' the figure of Christ in majesty, so he was also directly and positively involved in the 'passion' of Jesus, so that "many sons" might be brought through the path of suffering into glory, into the eternal blessings of the new covenant, the life of the new age.

5:2 Heb. 2:1-4

If Christ was indeed, as had been argued in the Epistle's opening section, "out of the depth's of God's Being"⁴, then any slipping away⁵ from commitment to the full truth must meet with dire consequences. Breaking the old covenant ("the message declared through angels") incurred severe penalties. How much worse case must be in who transgressed the new covenant, that "great salvation" declared through the Lord and borne witness to by God in the most striking ways (v.4). Our author, in this first of his uncompromising 'warning passages' (cf. 6:1-12; 10:26-39), expresses with Deuteronomic starkness⁶ his deeply felt concern for the spiritual welfare of the community. They are in danger - and the pastor/theologian who addresses them is under no illusion as to the seriousness of that danger. For him there is a real and significant continuity between the covenants, a continuity expressed not in outward form but in the changeless character of the covenant God. The same God who spoke of old has spoken in one who is son (1:1, 2) and he is still a holy God, "a consuming fire" (12:29). It is a fearful thing to fall into his hands (10:31), particularly if one has spurned his greatest act of grace. For our author, the matter is of the utmost urgency and goes far deeper than theological theory. It is the living, active and heart-searching God with whom his readers have to do (4:12, 13). Both he and they, therefore⁷, must 'give heed more abundantly to the things heard' (δεῖ περισσοτέρως προσέχειν ἡμῶς τοῖς ἀκουσ-θεῖσιν - 2:1).

What were these 'things heard'? In sum, they constitute that definitive self-expression of God as so clearly underlined at the outset of the Epistle. God has spoken (ἐλάλησεν) in a Son who is radiance of his glory and express image of his being (1:2, 3). Such absolute utterance goes far beyond the word spoken ἐν τοῖς προφήταις (1:1) and even ὁ δι' ἀγγέλων λαλήθεις λόγος (2:2), and demands a correspondingly absolute attention which bears fruit in obedient response. God required strict and detailed obedience to the Law which he spoke through angels⁸ and which was but a pointer to his full and final word. How much more⁹ must he require a totally committed dedication to what he has spoken (λαλήσθαι) through the Lord (2:3), that Lord

later described as the mediator of the new covenant (9:15) and already referred to as, by contrast with the angels, integral to the life of God¹⁰.

As Montefiore notes, the verb προσέχειν (2:1) expresses "a summons both to the mind and to the will: it carries overtones of a similar summons under the old dispensation (Deut. iv.9)"¹¹. As we have said, our author is here, as elsewhere, decidedly 'Deuteronomic' in his approach¹², his severe warnings being but the corollary of his earnest desire for the community to recognize and enjoy the full blessings of faithful obedience.

Those full blessings amount to σωτηρία, salvation (2:3), a favoured word of our author¹³ to express that complete realisation of their heavenly destiny which will be experienced by those who endure to the end. It involves deliverance - from the bondage of death and its terrors (2:14, 15) and from the bondage of sin (2:17) - but it also, like the Exodus event, involves entry into and possession of a promised land, not in this case an earthly Canaan (*contra* Buchanan¹⁴) but ἱερουσαλημ ἐπουρανίῳ (12:22) which is the true homeland of those who have been delivered and towards which they make pilgrimage in faith (cf. e.g. 3:7-4:11; 11-12), led (2:10; 12:2) by one through whom they have direct and confident access (cf. e.g. 4:14-16; 10:19-22) to the God who is not ashamed to be called their God and who has prepared for them a city (11:16).

Their salvation ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου (2:3), the Lord who is soon afterwards in the same chapter described as ἀρχηγός τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν (2:10). The reference in 2:3 is, surely, to far more than Christ's oral teaching¹⁵. As Moffatt puts it, "The Christian revelation was made through the Jesus who had lived and died and suffered and ascended, and the reference is not specifically to his teaching, but to his personality and career, in which God's saving purposes came to full expression"¹⁶. In other words, our author is pointing both backwards to what he has already proclaimed in the opening section of his Epistle and forwards to what he is about to elaborate. Like his other 'warning passages', 2:1-4 is not an interpolation or a diversion but is integral to his purpose and argument. His choice of words is, as always, significant. The verb λαλεῖν

has God as its implicit subject (cf. the use of $\delta\iota\alpha$ rather than $\��πο$) which is in keeping with the heavy theocentric emphasis of chapters 1 and 2, and which takes up particularly the fundamental theme introduced in 1:1f of the God who speaks¹⁷. $\Lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu$ occurs with some frequency in Hebrews (16 times in all) and in every reference concerns speech of real significance¹⁸, with God's involvement very much 'understood'. Half the references, indeed, express speech that comes directly from God¹⁹. At 2:3 the divine utterance of $\sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho\iota\alpha$ came $\delta\iota\alpha\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\upsilon$. Our author does not often refer to Christ as $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ - only here and at 1:10 (in a Psalm quotation); 7:14; and 13:20. It seems to have been a familiar title which was so accepted by his community that it could be used, as here, without any deictic qualification. "The Lord" in this context would clearly be understood as Jesus. Though it is evidently our author's intention to explore more fully other ways of describing Christ, we should not, therefore, too easily assume that his limited use of $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ is merely "conventional"²⁰. It is arguably invested with all the significance of his comprehensive "high Christology", thus reducing the term's inherent ambiguity. This possibility is supported by the way in which he first uses $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ to refer to Christ at 1.10. There, we suggested, God himself was recognizing and addressing his Son as divine, pre-existent and changeless. That staggering claim comes only a few phrases earlier than the occurrence of $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ at 2:3, and it is surely to be carried over in the same way as the author's understanding of $\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$ as set out in the opening section informs every usage of the term thereafter²¹. The salvation spoken through the Lord was spoken through one whom the Lord God himself addressed as $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\epsilon$ ²², one who was $\alpha\pi\alpha\upsilon\gamma\alpha\sigma\mu\epsilon\alpha\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \delta\acute{o\kappa\eta\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \chi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\tau\eta\rho\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \upsilon\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma$ (1:3), one in whom God has spoken his final word (1:2). Such salvation was indeed correspondingly great, for it came directly from the divine being, involving not even angelic mediation. How dare the community neglect what was offered and mediated by God himself?

What, then, are we to make of the phrase $\alpha\rho\chi\eta\nu\ \lambda\alpha\beta\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha$ in 2:3? Was $\delta\ \kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ not, after all, God's final and completed word of salvation but merely a beginning, a prologue? Such an interpretation would

seriously undermine, if not destroy, our author's whole presentation of the significance of Christ, in whom God's purposes for mankind have been brought to perfection. God has spoken - ἐλάλησεν - in a Son (1:2) and that definitive aorist finds its echo in the λαλεῖσθαι of 2:3. We are dealing here with far more than the completion of a preliminary paragraph.

Ἀρχή is to be understood as primarily *theological* in sense (cf. Jn. 1:1 and, arguably, Mk. 1:1²³). Certainly, temporality is involved but it is 'part and parcel' of the theological point being made. (We might indicate a similar integration in Acts 1:1: πάντων -- ὃν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν - The Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7) continued his ministry, so there was real continuity.) Here in Hebrews we are left in no doubt that the earthly ministry and death of Jesus were of the utmost importance²⁴. Yet they were an ἀρχή not only (or primarily) in the sense of a beginning in time but also (and most powerfully) in the sense of creative source and origin - the 'genesis' of that release into full and saving communion with God offered to all who would 'look to Jesus', the Jesus who was both τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγός καὶ τελειωτής (12:2) and ἀρχηγός τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν (2:10). As ἀρχηγός²⁵, Jesus was at the same time creator of salvation (suggesting another parallel with 1:10, where the Lord is described as creator of the material world κατ' ἀρχάς) and its pioneer, leader and prince. Again, our author chooses his word well, for it captures within it two of his most insistent emphases - the divine creativity of Christ, most particularly in the sphere of salvation, and the corresponding imperative on humanity's part for a reponse of obedient and courageous discipleship.

It is along these lines that we must interpret ἀρχή in 2:3. God spoke through the Lord (who was 'out of the depth of His being') in such a way that his word generated that new creation which is indeed ultimate salvation but which can only be entered into and enjoyed by a response of enduring faith. Such was confirmed and guaranteed (ἐβεβαιώθη²⁶) to the Hebrews community ὑπὸ τῶν ἀκουσάντων (2:3).

As ἀρχή means far more than a temporal beginning, so ἀκούω signifies more than physical hearing. In its immediate context (and in the context of the whole epistle) it must surely carry the connotation of hearing

with responsive faith²⁷. To borrow Synoptic terminology, those who heard had ears to hear (cf., e.g. Mk. 4:9 & pars. ὅς ἔχει ὣτα ἀκούειν ἀκούετω

). They perceived in the earthly Jesus the truth that God had spoken and they testified to their conviction, thus in some way bringing to faith that community about whom the author of Hebrews was so urgently concerned, and which had evidently not "heard" at first hand "the historical Jesus". It is perhaps no accident that ἀκούειν is a favourite word of the author of Deuteronomy (cf. especially its several occurrences in chapter 4 at vv. 1, 6, 10, 12, 28, 32, 33, 36, a chapter which seems to sound many echoes of themes found in our Epistle²⁸.) For the Deuteronomist, as for the author of Hebrews, to hear demanded a response of obedience²⁹, and what was heard was focussed in the promulgation of the Sinai covenant. The "things heard" (τοῖς ἀκουσθεῖσιν 2:1) by the Hebrews community concerned the 'covenant to end all covenants', thus requiring from the beneficiaries³⁰ a correspondingly absolute hearing with commitment (made clear in 2:1 by the association of ἀκούειν with προσέχειν).

Interestingly, it is this 'strong' sense of ἀκούειν which finds expression in every other usage of the verb in our Epistle. Three times (3:7, 15; 4:7) it occurs in quotation from Ps. 95:7 - Σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε, μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν . The challenge is to an obedience to God's voice (that voice which has spoken ἐν νύκτι and διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου) which will contrast with the rebelliousness of the Israelites in the wilderness, thus making it possible to enter the divine rest denied to God's people of old. The occurrences of ἀκούειν in 3:16 and 4:2 revolve around the same theme, the latter instance specifically underlining the need for hearing with faith: οὐκ ᾤφελθεν ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς ἐκείνους μὴ συγκεκρασμένος τῇ πίστει τοῖς ἀκούσασιν . The remaining reference at 12:19 is also in the context of a contrast between the people of the old and new covenants (καὶ φωνῇ ῥημάτων, ἧς οἱ ἀκούσαντες παρητήσαντο μὴ προστεθῆναι αὐτοῖς λόγον). It is not without significance that every time ἀκούειν is used in Hebrews, the substance of what is heard comes explicitly or by implication and/or mediation from the mouth of God.

The God who has spoken also bears witness (συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος - 2:4: note the use of the present participle) to the truth of his speech, thus corroborating the testimony of those who had heard the Lord (and fulfilling in abundance the Law's requirement of two witnesses³¹). God's testimony consisted of signs and wonders, of various mighty deeds and of distributions of the Holy Spirit according to his will (2.4). Such divine confirmatory witness could not lightly be ignored. Our author does not give specific illustrations of the mighty acts of God to which he is referring. They had perhaps become all too familiar to his community - in a way in which persecution and suffering, greatly stressed in our Epistle, had not (though, as he reminded them, they had endured hardship in the past - 10:32ff.). The phenomena designated by the phrase "signs and wonders" were by no means limited to the Hebrews community. The phrase occurs 15 times in the NT. Nine of these occurrences are in Acts³²; the remaining six are scattered through Gospels and Epistles³³. Three references³⁴ underline what might be termed the negative possibilities of σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα, but we cannot agree with Dunn that, outside Acts, the phrase is "usually" employed to "characterize the works of the false prophet, the attitude of unfaith, the boasting of counterfeit apostles, the deceit of anti-Christ"³⁵. Rom. 15:18-19, 2 Cor. 12:12³⁶ and Heb. 2:4 all have a very positive content, pointing to God as the source and perpetrator. In terms of numbers (setting aside Acts), the case is evenly balanced. In terms of the N.T. Church's belief in signs and wonders as appropriate to the activity of God, the weight is on the side of a God who does perform mighty works. Warnings against misunderstanding and counterfeit use serve only to point to the significance of the "real thing".

Here in Hebrews, it is instructive to look at the LXX usage of the phrase. There, of 24 references, 16 refer to God's deliverance of his people from Egypt³⁷. Of the ten instances in Deuteronomy, seven have this context³⁸. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that the author of Hebrews should point to the divine testimony of 'signs and wonders' when underlining the superiority of that great act of deliverance (σωτηρία) which, as he stresses later, was to bring in the new covenant (διαθήκη καινή). There was amply recorded precedent for God's performing mighty works in association with his saving of his people. It may be worth noting, too, that of the eight remaining refer-

ences to 'signs and wonders' in the LXX, only two have a negative sense, relating to "a false prophet or a dreamer" (Deut. 13:1, 2). The others associate the phenomena very much with *God's* activity (Deut. 28:46; Is. 8:18; 20:3; Dan. 3:32; 6:27) and it is interesting that a part of one of these verses is quoted in Hebrews at 2:13 (i.e. Is. 8:18: ἰδοὺ ἔγωγὴ καὶ τὰ τέκνα ἃ ἐμοὶ ἐξέσωκεν ὁ Θεός). It is these children who, according to Isaiah, will be "for signs and wonders in the house of Israel from the Lord of Hosts who dwells in mount Sion". It would be fascinating to speculate whether our author might have had this unquoted part of the verse also in his mind, thus opening up the possibility that 'signs and wonders' constituted for him not only spectacular acts but also those children whom God was bringing to glory. Certainly he immediately follows his statement about the divine testimony of signs and wonders (in 2:4) with a profound discussion (2:5-18) about the nature and destiny of mankind in relation to the vocation and experience of Jesus, whose being made perfect in suffering could, perhaps, be described as the greatest of God's signs and wonders. Those whom Jesus is not ashamed to call brethren must expect and accept that combination of suffering and glory which will testify to the world of the reality and character of God's salvation and which will thus point to Jesus. Such, indeed, could be one of the ways in which our author seeks to interpret more deeply (and certainly more uncomfortably) what is known and familiar to his community (cf. e.g. their understanding of Christ as 'Son' and 'Lord'³⁹).

God's testimony of signs and wonders is associated in 2:4 with "manifold mighty works and distributions of Holy Spirit according to his own will". The linking together of σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα occurs also at Acts 2:22 (though in reverse order) and δύναμις is, of course, very much a 'Synoptic word' used to describe the miracles of Jesus, worked in the power of God⁴⁰. In Hebrews 2:4, the three words point very definitely to the character and activity of the God who saves - and who saves through Jesus. Signs direct attention towards him, wonders evoke a response of awe and worship, and mighty acts display his power. The God of Hebrews is indeed majestic and awful in his being and works⁴¹ but, as our author insists in his subsequent exposition, that awful majesty is expressed in one who in the days of his

flesh submitted to being made perfect through suffering, so that many sons might be brought to glory. The integration of majesty and suffering, of absolute divine power and weakness, may be said to be one of the major achievements of the unknown theologian who produced our epistle⁴².

In NT usage, 'signs and wonders' were particularly associated with the Holy Spirit⁴³ and the Hebrews reference is no exception. Our author has often been accused of paying scant attention to the Holy Spirit⁴⁴. His references to τὸ Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον are certainly comparatively few and not entirely without ambiguity (cf. 2:4; 3:7; 6:4; 9:8, 14 (Πνεύματος αἰωνίου); 10:15, 29 (τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος)). Three of these references (2:4; 6:4; 9:14) are anarthrous and could possibly therefore be taken to describe divine spiritual force rather than a divine being. Yet the other instances seem to make it clear that our author conceived of the Holy Spirit as having an individual and significant existence. So at 3:7 and 10:15 it is τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον who speaks (in the present tense) through scripture (Διό, καθὼς λέγει τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον, Σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσῃτε -- 3:7; Παρτυρεῖ δε ἡμῖν καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον -- Αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη ἣν διαθήσομαι πρὸς αὐτοὺς -- 10:15). At 9:8 the Holy Spirit has an indicative role and at 10:29 τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος is capable of being "outraged" (ἐνυβρίσας). It is surely the case that our author, whilst accepting the reality and importance of the Holy Spirit, felt that the urgent theological message he was burning to deliver focussed on Jesus and his relationship with God. Perhaps, too, he felt that his community had been giving an unbalanced attention to the 'charismatic' manifestations of the Spirit (as a feature of their 'exaltation spirituality') and that the balance could be redressed by a concentrated 'looking to Jesus'. Paul deals with a similar problem in Corinth by an extended exposition of the nature and purpose of spiritual gifts⁴⁵. Our author prefers to highlight the work of God in Jesus, for in so doing he can underline the necessary and creative relationship between passion and glory in true Christian experience.

According to 2:4, distributions of Holy Spirit are κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ θέλησιν. Our author's consistent theocentricity (particularly in the immed-

late context of the first two chapters) suggests strongly that αὐτοῦ should be taken in association with τοῦ Θεοῦ earlier in the verse. God distributes the Holy Spirit according to his own will. Adopting this reading⁴⁶ thus makes for a difference in emphasis between Heb. 2:4 and 1 Cor. 12:11, where it is clearly τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα who apportions to each one individually as he wills (καθὼς βούλεται). In Heb. 2:4, the active sovereignty of God in this respect is further underlined by the use of Θελησίς. Occurring only here in the NT⁴⁷, the word points to the power and independence of God, as one very clearly in control. Such is the emphasis throughout the Epistle.

This definite theocentricity is perhaps a feature to be borne in mind when making any comparison between Heb. 2:3, 4 and Mark 16:19, 20. A. Feuillet⁴⁸ has argued that the resemblances between these two passages are very close and, indeed, extend as far as grammatical construction (cf. e.g. the genitive absolute to express the divine confirmation of the word). Certainly there are interesting similarities: the pattern of moving from Jesus to the proclamation of his followers to the divine guarantee by the working of signs; the use of κύριος, λαλέω, βεβαίω, σημεῖα. Yet one must also point to interesting (and perhaps significant) differences: in Mk. 16:19 the risen Lord has been speaking words of commissioning to his disciples, whereas in Heb. 2:3 it is σωτηρία which has been spoken (by God) διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου (thus constituting a rather more comprehensive theological statement); in Mk. 16:20 it is the Lord (arguably Jesus) who works with his disciples, confirming the word, whereas in Heb. 2:4 it is unambiguously ὁ Θεός who bears witness, and with rather more than 'following signs'. The 'Markan' passage makes no mention of Holy Spirit distributed according to God's sovereign pleasure nor does it suggest a comparison between the two covenants. All in all, the Hebrews passage comes across as a more profound and wide-ranging theological summary. Whatever its historical relationship with the 'Markan' verses, one cannot readily imagine that it was written by the same author, or even that the writers shared precisely the same doctrinal views. At most, the authors may have been drawing on similar "stock phrases", investing them with their own particular meanings⁴⁹.

To sum up, the theological content of Heb. 2:1-4, as we have sought to demonstrate above, is of the utmost importance in relation to the author's overall message. With graphic urgency, it underlines what has already been proclaimed and points forward to the exposition of "so great salvation" which is to follow. The Hebrews community is soon to be left in no doubt that God's creative speech $\delta\iota\alpha\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \text{Κυρίου}$ was uttered at great cost.

5.3 Heb. 2:5.

At 1:14, the angels have been described as $\lambdaειτουργικὰ\ πνεύματα$ sent to serve $\delta\iota\alpha\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \mu\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\omicron\nu\tau\alpha\varsigma\ \kappa\lambda\eta\rho\omicron\nu\omicron\mu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\ \sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu$. Something of the urgent significance and responsibility of that $\sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$ has been indicated in 2:1-4. Now, at 2:5, our author prepares to expound more fully and explicitly its character and its cost.

The fulness of their great salvation will be enjoyed when "those about to inherit" ($\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \mu\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\omicron\nu\tau\alpha\varsigma\ \kappa\lambda\eta\rho\omicron\nu\omicron\mu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ - - - 1:14) finally enter into their inheritance, summed up in 2:5 by the phrase $\tau\grave{\eta}\nu\ \omicron\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta\nu$ $\tau\grave{\eta}\nu\ \mu\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\nu$. This coming $\omicron\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$ (we have suggested above⁵⁰) is the world of the new covenant, the new age, and our author would have his readers understand that it is already the subject under discussion ($\pi\epsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\ \hat{\eta}\varsigma\ \lambda\alpha\lambda\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\nu$ - 2:5). Those who respond to God's expression of himself "through the Lord" (2:3) and "in a Son" (1:2) know even now "in these last days" (1:2) something of the blessings of the new $\omicron\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$

(2:4). The best, however, is yet to come and, we shall argue, our author uses Psalm 8 to suggest just how glorious this full inheritance will be. The coming world will not be subjected to angels, those supernatural holy ones whose rôle in the government of the affairs of people and nations was accepted by many within the Judaism of the day⁵¹. Rather, it will be under subjection to redeemed humanity, to those many $\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\acute{\iota}$ whom God is bringing to glory (2:10)⁵². And the privilege they will receive will be decidedly comprehensive (2:8), involving, quite simply, $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$. It is an awe-inspiring prospect, a destiny even greater, perhaps, than the Hebrews community had imagined. Yet they must also realise that this destiny is

theirs only through and with Jesus and depends upon their steadfast allegiance to him. Jesus is the ἀρχηγός of their privileged destiny, their pioneering representative, the one who is crowned with glory and honour and therefore king of the new world, (the one they were celebrating in their liturgy?) - and they, too, as his ἀδελφοὶ (2:1) will enter through and with him into an inheritance of glory (2:10). But - and here was the rub - the "coronation" of Jesus was διὰ τὸ πάθος τοῦ θανάτου, because of the suffering of death (2:9). The 'heir of all things' (κληρονόμον πάντων 1:2) enters into his inheritance as ruler of the new οἰκουμένη (then to be worshipped by angels, 1:6) by means of the path of suffering, the gate of death. It is a path which his "brothers" must also tread⁵³. All the more so because, in our author's conviction, the experience of the ἀρχηγός was not only within the divine purpose, it was also within the divine life; for the ἀρχηγός was none other than God's definitive self-expression (1:1-3).

The idea of Christ's followers sharing his dominion in the new age appears in various strands of NT scripture. Matt. 19:28 has Jesus telling his disciples that in the regeneration (παλιγγενεσία) when the Son of man sits in the throne of his glory they will also sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Scholarly opinion varies as to whether κρίνοντες is meant to apply to the Last Judgement or to ongoing government and administration, on the lines of the OT "judges"⁵⁴. There is also some discussion as to whether "the twelve tribes of Israel" refers to the Jews or to the new Israel of God⁵⁵. For our purposes, however, it is sufficient to point to the saying's expressed conviction that the "son of man", who sits in glory to judge in the 'born again' age, will include his disciples in the privilege. In terminology as well as in ideas there are links here with the thinking of Hebrews. The son of man phrase excites interest, though it is important to note that in its occurrence at Heb. 2:6 it is anarthrous and arguably not confined to a Jesus reference⁵⁶. Both Matt. and Hebrews agree that it is the right of Jesus to reign in glory, sitting on a throne (cf. e.g. Heb 1:3, 4, 8, 13; 2:9), and both writings see the new age in terms of re-creation (cf e.g. Heb.'s use of Ps. 8 in the exposition at 2:5ff.). Yet, the Matthean logion has a far more limited framework for the reign of Christ's disciples than that which is implied in Heb. 2:5-9. The disciples in Matthew had as their sphere

of authority only the "twelve tribes of Israel" and, then, perhaps only at the Last Judgement. The disciples in Hebrews can look forward to having πάντα placed in subjection to them and there is no hint that this is to be confined to a specific occasion. It is rather the full enjoyment in terms of the coming world of that dominion intended for mankind in the first Genesis²⁷. Further, the Hebrews passage points clearly to the essential connection between the inheritance of the disciples and Jesus' experience of the suffering of death. In Matthew, any "passion" reference is to be found in 19:29, where those who sacrifice what is precious "will inherit eternal life".

The significance of suffering with Jesus is made more explicit in the Lukan version of Matthew's logion (Lk. 22:28-30)²⁸. Here the context is the Last Supper and Jesus addresses his disciples as those "who have remained with me (μετ' ἐμοῦ) in my trials". He appoints to them as his Father has appointed to him a kingdom (βασιλείαν), so that they may eat and drink at his table in his kingdom and they will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The sovereign rule of Christ (who does not here use the description 'son of man') and by extension of his followers is clearly underlined by the use of βασιλεία, reminding us, perhaps, of that "unshakeable kingdom" (βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτος) mentioned at Heb. 12:28, though here the receipt of such enduring kingly rule is not limited to the twelve tribes of Israel and is spoken of as being present (παρὰ λαμβάνοντες). It is part of that crucial tension in Hebrews between 'now' and 'not yet' which permeates the Epistle and which can only be viably sustained by "looking to Jesus" (12:2)²⁹. So at 2:8, the author concedes that "Νῦν δὲ οὐπω ὁρῶμεν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ὑποτεταγμένα but we βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν (2:9). Focussing attention on him who, being the ἀπαύγασμα of God's glory (1:3), yet tasted death ὑπὲρ παντὸς (2:9) should convince disciples that the coming οἰκουμένη, still to be experienced in its fulness, is nonetheless the true and indestructible reality, the inheritance of all who steadfastly follow the ἀρχηγός. This discerning vision should encourage them to 'become what they are', to practise confident and courageous Christian living, to take advantage of that access to the throne of grace which is even now wide open to them (cf. e.g.

4:14-16; 10:19-23). Such confidence, however, cannot have the character of triumphalism, for it must be maintained in the face of severe challenge and testing, as the Hebrews community in the early days of their faith had well realised (10:32-34). Now they need reminding of the necessity for "endurance" ὑπομονή (10:36), looking to him who "endured" (ὑπομεμνηκότι) hostility (12:3) and pioneered their glorious destiny (2:10). They do not yet enjoy comprehensive dominion, but it is guaranteed so long as they keep their first confidence firm to the end (6:11, 12).

The message that courageous faithfulness will "in the end" bring a share in the exalted Christ's sovereignty is to be found also in the book of Revelation - though here again the authority to be given is not as in Hebrews specified as involving πάντα. There are two instances which merit particular consideration. In one instance, at least, (if not in both) the Christian's coming ἐξουσία has a decidedly "political" flavour. The members of the church at Thyatira are promised that he who conquers (ὁ νικῶν) and who keeps Christ's works until the end (ἄχρι τέλους) will be given authority over the nations, ruling them with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:26f.; cf Ps. 2:8). The lukewarm Laodiceans are bidden to heed the promise that ὁ νικῶν will be granted to sit with Christ on his throne as Christ himself conquered and sat down with his Father on his throne (Rev. 3:21)⁶⁰. Here is a promise that goes beyond the Synoptic dominical sayings, for faithful disciples will not so much have their own thrones alongside Christ's as be identified in sovereignty with God himself (for all three parties will apparently share the same "throne").

We come nearer to Hebrews' concept of dominion over *all creation* with Paul's words to the Corinthians at 1 Cor. 3:21-23⁶¹. There is here expressed an idea of co-ownership with God which is very much in the present and which is cosmic in its scope: πάντα ὑμῶν, ὑμεῖς δὲ Χριστοῦ, Χριστὸς δὲ Θεοῦ. The writer of Hebrews would certainly agree with this "nutshell" proclamation but, as his Epistle makes clear, he would also want to point out that such a total sharing in God's right of possession can only be fully realised when the coming οἰκουμένη is established in such a way as to disperse all

shadows and to exclude all challengers, that is, when Christ appears a second time to bring to "salvation" those who are eagerly waiting for him (9:28).

It is interesting that our author chooses the word οἰκουμένη to express his vision of the world to come rather than αἰών or κόσμος which he is content to use in other contexts⁵². N. Turner feels that its meaning in Hebrews may well reflect "a new christian use as a near equivalent of αἰών, with the proviso that οἰκουμένη will lay more stress on the inhabitants of the dispensation to come"⁵³. Heb. 12:22-24 certainly leaves us in no doubt that the new age (expressed here in terms of "heavenly Jerusalem") is well peopled and this emphasis is perhaps underlined by the writer's use of οἶκος elsewhere in the Epistle in relation to the people of God (cf. 3:2, 3, 4, 5, 6; 8:8, 10; 10:21; 11:7)⁵⁴. Οἰκουμένη thus incorporates an idea that is clearly of some significance for our author - in the perfect world dwell innumerable inhabitants (12:1, 22-24; 13:14) and they are bound and related to one another because they are God's οἶκος, his household (3:6; 10:21). Such a notion picks up the Jews' understanding of themselves as the household of God (cf. e.g. Is. 57:7; Jer. 12:7; Zech. 7 and 1QS8.5ff. where it is the inner council of the community which is described as "a house"⁵⁵). It is also a notion to be found elsewhere in the NT, applied to Christians (Eph. 2:21f; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 4:17 and cf. Jn. 14:2, where it applies to the heavenly realm). Our author draws further attention to this conception of God's people (and stresses its "extended family" character) by describing those people as God's children (cf. e.g. 2:10) and ἀδελφοί of Jesus (cf. e.g. 2:12, 17). We focus all the more on this family image because of the absence from Hebrews of any description of Christians as the "Body" of Christ or as being "in Christ".

In using οἰκουμένη, therefore, our author encourages us to think more of the "community" aspect of the coming world than of its abstract construction⁵⁶. That aspect is consistently highlighted by the various other words and phrases he uses during the course of his Epistle to refer to the new age, notably σαββατισμός τῷ λαῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ (4:9); τὴν τοὺς θεμελίους ἔχουσιν πάλιν, ἥς τεχνίτης - - - ὁ Θεός (11:10); πόλις Θεοῦ ὡντος, Ἱερουσαλήμ ἐπουρανίῳ (12:22); οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ὥδε μένουσαν πόλιν, ἀλλὰ τὴν μέλλουσαν ἐπις τοῦ μεν.

(13:14). God's new covenant people are citizens of the true and perfect holy city, "the city or commonwealth", as F.F. Bruce puts it, "which comprises the whole family of faith, God's true dwelling place"⁶⁷ (cf. Gal. 4:26; Rev. 3.12; 21-22).

The idea of a heavenly city to come, identified with new Jerusalem, is clearly present in rabbinic and apocalyptic writing which post-dates (or is roughly contemporary with) Hebrews⁶⁸, though there is some confusion as to the city's precise relationship with earthly Zion⁶⁹. Despite the absence of specific terminology from earlier Jewish literature, Paul's bald and unexplained phrase in Gal. 4:26, "Jerusalem which is above" would suggest that the notion was already a familiar one (cf. also the hopes expressed since the Exile of a restored and renewed Jerusalem and Temple⁷⁰). It would seem, then, that our author may well be drawing again on something known to his community in associating "the city of the living God" (12.22) with the new age but in his understanding, of course, the new age has already dawned and heavenly Jerusalem is even now a vivid and approachable reality for the pilgrim people of God. It is also to be thought of in 'cosmic' terms rather than being limited to 'urban' horizons, for (in our author's view) it expresses a whole new creation (cf. the "new Jerusalem" of Rev. 21). Hence, his use of οἰκουμένη (rather than, say, πόλις) at the outset of the Epistle is particularly apt, for it can comprehend both the universal and well populated character of God's new world.

Perhaps, too, with his evident love of words and his facility for weaving them together suggestively, even poetically (cf. e.g. 1:1-4; 12:18-24), our author in selecting οἰκουμένη may have been attracted by the echo in terms of sound of the verb μένω. It is a verb which he uses elsewhere to emphasize the eternal character of both Jesus (1:11, σὺ δὲ διαμένεις; 7:24, ὃς τὸ μένειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) and the heavenly world (10:24, κρείσσονα ὑπάρξιν καὶ μένουσαν; 13:14, μένουσαν πόλιν; cf. 12.27, ἵνα μένῃ τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα). It is possible, then, that such an aural link reinforced the choice of οἰκουμένη, for it meshed in well with the writer's concern to communicate the permanence of that

experience of the new world which will be a "Sabbath rest" for God's people (4:9).

It will also, for all its inhabitants, be an experience of a radically transformed creation. As indicated in 1:12, the old earth and heaven "will be changed" (ἀλλὰ γίνονται), "made other than they are" in that in the new world, God's purposes will be fully realised. Those purposes are expressed for our author in the verses he quotes from Ps. 8 (Heb. 2.6-8) which he takes to be a prophecy of the "coming world", the new creation where the faithful "brethren" of Jesus will have "all things" put in subjection to them, in the way that "male and female" were originally intended to have dominion (cf. Gen. 1:27ff.). Here again, as with the associated concept of heavenly Jerusalem, our author is no doubt drawing on existing Jewish eschatology. We may recall the prophetic vision of an earth which will be filled with the knowledge of God and whose creaturely inhabitants will no longer be at odds with each other (cf. e.g. Is. 11:6-9) - an earth when, it seems the primal curse will be removed and there will no longer be enmity between human seed and the seed of the serpent (Is. 11:8 cf. Gen. 3:15)⁷¹. In the same prophetic tradition, we find later the expressed conviction that God will create "new heavens and a new earth" (Is. 65.17. Interestingly, this oracle is immediately followed by a prophecy of re-created Jerusalem, cf. Is. 66.22, where the permanent character of the new heavens and new earth is stressed⁷².) Much Jewish apocalyptic literature takes up this vision in one way or another (cf. e.g. 1 En. 45:4-5, which talks of a transformed earth and heaven and Testament of Moses 10:9f., which envisages Israel being taken up into a heavenly kingdom⁷³). The writer of Hebrews is certainly not alone in looking forward to a new world order but his particular understanding cannot easily be paralleled in the previous or contemporary literature of Judaism, apocalyptic or otherwise. His comprehensive and integrated perception of a coming (and yet already existing)

οἰκουμένη, that divine household, that heavenly Jerusalem, that new creation, in which God's purposes for humanity as intimated in Ps. 8 are fully realised, was doubtless informed by his Jewish background, but it was certainly transformed and re-drawn by his experience and understanding of Christ. For him, the new world had its genesis in the suffering and death of

the Son of God, a concept which goes beyond the various hopes and speculations current in Judaism.

5.4 2.6-8a

It is difficult to find any unambiguous evidence of the use of Ps. 8 in Jewish literature of pre-Christian or peri-Christian date to characterise the new age - still less (pace Kistemaker⁷⁴) to associate the psalm with the coming of the messiah. As Howard Kee has argued⁷⁵, Sir. 17:1-11; Wisdom 9:1-13; 1QS 3:16-18 and CD 3:19-21 may all be contenders with regard to a 'new creation' interpretation of the psalm, though it must be said that the allusions here could equally (perhaps more convincingly) be located in Gen. 2. A *messianic* interpretation only becomes a clear possibility with the Targum on Ps. 8, where the individualised reading could be seen as pointing to "some sort of final saving figure in the Son of Man"⁷⁶. How far one can assume that this "may well express earlier tradition"⁷⁷ is a moot point. It is possible, but there is no indication of this in literature (so far available) which was produced at such a time that it could influence the NT documents.

Yet in the NT, Psalm 8 is clearly of some importance - and in a way which frequently weaves together eschatology and christology. It is definitely quoted at Matt. 21:16 (Ps. 8:3 LXX), 1 Cor. 15:27 (Ps. 8:6), Ephes. 1:22 (Ps. 8:6) and, of course, in the Hebrews passage under discussion (Heb. 2:6-8; Ps. 8:4-6), where, true to form, our author uses rather more of the psalm than his fellow NT writers⁷⁸. In all these passages, the quoted portion of Ps. 8 is closely associated with Jesus: in Matt. with his ascription as 'Son of David' by the children crying out in the Temple, in 1 Cor. with the risen Christ as "first-fruits" (ἀπαρχὴ vv 20, 23) of resurrected humanity, in Ephes. with the heavenly Christ's sovereign rule, in Heb. with the Jesus who was crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death. Again, each of these

passages could be seen as being written within a context which at least alludes to the character of the 'new age'. So in Matt. the old order, symbolized by the Temple, has just been cleansed (21:12-13) and healings characteristic of the new age have been ministered in its purified precincts (21:14 cf. e.g. Is. 35:5-6). In 1 Cor. and Ephes. we are pointed clearly to the realities of the heavenly realm - and in Hebrews the psalm quotation is an integral part of the author's discussion of the coming world.

Allusions to Ps. 8 have also been discerned in Rom. 3:23, Phil. 2:9-11; 3:21 and 1 Pet. 3:22⁷⁸. The strongest case can perhaps be put for the latter two passages, both of which highlight the theme of 'subjection', a notable feature of Ps. 8:6 and one which was evidently of great importance in those passages where direct use is made of the psalm. It seems, then, that a vivid conviction of Christ's God-given sovereignty over all things was widespread among the NT churches and that Ps. 8:6 provided a powerfully evocative means of expressing this conviction. Indeed, the heart of the psalm (vv. 4-6) probably evoked and drew together a number of other OT passages and themes which Christians saw as pointing to Jesus, particularly in his exalted state.

One such passage was Ps. 110:1, a verse often quoted in the NT⁸⁰ to underline the messianic identity and majesty of Jesus, seated at the right hand of God and waiting until his enemies are made a stool for his feet. In every instance where Ps. 8 is clearly referred to in the epistles, a reference to Ps. 110:1 can be found in close conjunction. So in 1 Cor. 15, the reference to Ps. 8:6 in v. 27 is preceded by a clear allusion to Ps. 110:1 in v. 25. In Ephes. 1, v. 20 draws on Ps. 110:1 to be followed in v. 22 by the use of Ps. 8:6. Again, in Hebrews, the opening pointers to Ps. 110:1 have already been articulated in chapter 1 (vv. 3 & 13) and provide a significant part of the context for the exposition of Ps. 8:4-6 in Heb. 2:6-8. The same pattern obtains within a single verse at 1 Pet. 3:22, with its allusions, first to Ps. 110:1 and then to Ps. 8:6. All this would seem to suggest that the conjunction of Ps. 110:1 and Ps. 8:6 was a commonly accepted one and that Ps. 110:1 (with its more evidently messianic associations⁸¹) supplied the primary impetus for their coming together. 'Subjection' was most probably the suggestive link (and it is interesting that at Mk. 12:35ff., where Jesus is recorded as quoting Ps.

110:1, the latter part of that verse has been accommodated to Ps. 8:6 by the substitution of ὑποκλίνω for ὑποπόδιον ; cf. 1 Cor. 15:25 - ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας). Psalm 8:6 must also have reflected well the early church's growing perception of 'the cosmic Christ', the one who would not only be given power over his enemies, but also sovereignty over "all things".

Loader sees the relationship between the two psalm verses as being established and propagated through "some form of catechetical instruction or confessional affirmation about the work and reign of Christ"²². It is perhaps equally likely that the primary context was that of worship - which seems, after all, to have been the original 'primary context' of the psalms themselves²³. There are those, however, who would question the likelihood of the early Christians using OT psalms as a vehicle for their worship²⁴. P.F. Bradshaw, for example, points to the uncertainty as to whether the Psalter was sung or prayed in synagogue worship in the first century. Holding that the synagogue pattern was formative for Christians, he goes on to argue that in the Christian community "the primary use of the Psalter was for preaching and apologetic". "If the psalms had any liturgical use, therefore," Bradshaw suggests, "it was probably as reading, a part of the ministry of the word rather than as an act of prayer and praise"²⁵.

Against Bradshaw and those who would take a similar view, we might make a number of points. Is it perhaps too easy an assumption that the earliest "Church services" were moulded exclusively by those of the synagogue? It would seem from Acts that, initially at least, the followers of Jesus in Jerusalem attended the temple daily (Acts 2:46)²⁶ - and the psalms were undoubtedly a significant part of Temple worship, sung by the Levitical choirs to express individual and corporate prayer²⁷. Moreover, the psalms are heavily characterised by that ἀγκάλλισις in which (in the same sentence from Acts 2:46) the first Christians are said to have shared their food²⁸. In their rejoicing as they experienced table fellowship, it would surely not be surprising if they drew on those songs of praise which were not only a familiar heritage of scripture but also a daily part of their devotional 'diet' - and which they now saw as being fulfilled in Jesus, crucified, risen and exalted. Certainly, when the community is recorded as being at prayer in Acts

4:25, 26, verses from Psalm 2 are incorporated into their act of thanksgiving and supplication²². And these were the Christians who, when scattered abroad (cf. Acts 8:1) would arguably have a significant influence on the worshipping patterns of their new assemblies of believers (of which many of them may have been 'founder members'²⁰). It is interesting, too, that in the *Gospels*, psalm extracts are often used in quasi-liturgical settings and in the context of prayer. So at the baptism of Jesus we find an allusion to Ps. 2:7 (Matt. 3:17 // Mk. 1:11 // Lk. 3:22 - where Jesus is also said to be praying, v. 21)²¹. The same psalm verse is taken up into the 'religious experience' of the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5 // Mk. 9:7 // Lk. 9:35 - again Jesus is in this account represented as praying, v. 29). Prayer is also the recorded vehicle for some of the psalms alluded to in the Passion Narrative (which is itself regarded by some as designed originally for liturgical use²²). The 'hymning' referred to in the context of the Last Supper (Mk. 14:26 pars.) was almost certainly a singing of the Passover Hallel Psalms (Pss. 113-118). At the Crucifixion, Jesus is portrayed as praying in words from the psalms (Ps. 22:1 - Matt. 27:46 // Mk. 15:34; Ps. 31:5 - Lk. 23:46, Ps. 69:21 - Jn. 19:28). We might also consider the possible implications of the use of Ps. 8 in Matt. 21:15, 16. The setting is the Temple, the centre of Jewish worship, at Passover festival time. The cry of the children ('Hosanna to the Son of David') is perhaps taken further than its messianic associations by Jesus' responsive use of a psalm verse which expressed praise of God (and which would be sung in the Temple for that purpose). Indeed, all this Gospel material may well tend to support Hengel's thesis that Jewish psalmody featured significantly in the emergence of a 'hymn to Christ' in the early Christian community²³. Not only was there the proclaimed example of Jesus in using psalms to communicate with God, the nature, context and message of the 'voice from heaven' (plus the implication of the use of Ps. 8 in Matt. 21) pointed to the divinely approved reality of revelation concerning the true character of Jesus which was apprehended in the setting of prayer and liturgy.

Further, Jewish convictions regarding the character of the psalms meshed in well with the character of early Christian worship. As Hengel puts it, "For Judaism and early Christianity David was not only king but as the writer of psalms, also a prophet and endowed with the Spirit"²⁴. "Yahweh gave him a

wise and enlightened spirit", declares the Qumran Psalms Scroll of Cave 11, "And the sum (of his songs) was 4050. These he uttered through prophecy, which had been given him by the most High"⁹⁵. Prophetic utterance in the Spirit and Spirit-inspired praise seem to have been integral to the worship meetings of the first Christians (cf. Acts 11:27, 28; 1 Cor. 12:14; Ephes. 5:12-20; Col. 3:16)⁹⁶. The psalms - particularly those seen as pointing clearly to 'great David's greater Son'⁹⁷ - must have seemed a 'natural' vehicle to express response to the prompting of the Spirit of the Lord - that Spirit through whom the risen Lord Jesus was believed to be present in the midst of the assembly and through whom also believers were drawn into the worship of heaven⁹⁸. It is surely more than likely that in this context the "psalms" mentioned alongside 'hymns and spiritual songs' in Ephes. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 (and, indeed, the $\psi\alpha\lambda\mu\omicron\iota$ brought by believers to the assembly in 1 Cor. 14:26) include 'the psalms of David'⁹⁹. 'New songs' there certainly were, but the 'old' were also being claimed to seek to articulate in worship an experience of Christ which was direct, life-transforming and explosive of former boundaries. Neither synagogue nor Temple was entirely sufficient for these things - even where the synagogue *did* apparently use psalmody and songs as in the Diaspora¹⁰⁰. Christian worship, in its context and expression, was a "new thing" but familiar elements like the psalms undoubtedly supplied some of its raw materials. This is well illustrated from the Book of Revelation where several of the 'worship songs' draw significantly on the OT Psalter (cf., e.g. 11:15 cf. Ps. 2, 22:29; 11:17-18 cf. Ps. 2:1, 5, Ps. 115:13; 15:3-4 cf. Ps. 92:5; 98:1; 145:17; 86:9)¹⁰¹.

As we mentioned above, Hengel suggests that the 'messianic' psalms (like 110 and 8) contributed in no small measure to the (early) emergence of a 'hymn to Christ', of which the precise form and wording were creatively variable but which possessed a standard "core" proclaiming the passion and exaltation of Christ and the subjection of powers to him¹⁰². According to Hengel, this hymn "begins with the messianic psalms and ends in the prologue to John"¹⁰³. It was a Spirit-inspired composition rehearsing "things which were not yet ripe for expression in prose, which could be expressed only in the form of the narrative praise of the song, in divinely inspired singing"¹⁰⁴. If this be accepted, it is arguably also true that such boldness in worship constituted a

major impetus to the emergence and development of christological *thinking*¹⁰⁵. As we have already suggested, this pattern may well be forcefully illustrated by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The 'narrative' character of Hengel's postulated 'hymn to Christ' is perhaps of particular interest in relation to the influence of the Psalter. Integral to many of the psalms is the proclamation and affirmation of the mighty works of God, especially in relation to the children of Israel¹⁰⁶. In proclaiming and affirming, in a liturgical context, God's mighty work of redemption in Christ, Christians were following in the tradition of Jewish psalmody, so, again, it would not be surprising if phrases from the psalms themselves were brought into service.

The author of Hebrews quotes more phrases from Ps. 8 than any other writer in the NT. In his case, perhaps, the use of Ps. 8:6 in Christian worship led him to 'make connections' with other parts of the psalm, just as, in the same setting, the first verse of Ps. 110 awakened for him the significance of the fourth. Acts of devotion led to creative thinking - and we might well apply to our author in this regard some words of P.W. Collins in relation to creativity generally: "Creativity involves bringing something new into being out of the old and familiar... This happens in a surrender to the encounter that is totally absorbing. Being so intensely caught up in the experience, a heightened form of consciousness is spawned. Reality dissolves, diffuses and is recreated... The seeing is a gift"¹⁰⁷.

Such may well have been the context for what we find in Heb. 2:5ff. What our author "saw" in the intensity of his encounter brought together and expanded existing perceptions of Christ and his work, putting them in that broad and deep theological and pastoral framework which constitutes his Epistle. His exposition of Ps. 8:4-6 is an important facet of his integrated vision - and that vision, formed through worship, is communicated in a "word of exhortation"(13:22) surely designed to be read out to a community itself assembled for worship and therefore likely to be using some of the psalmody to which he refers¹⁰⁸. Such a state of affairs created the potential for his message to have "maximum impact", for it was delivered in a setting conducive

Such an activity might well have brought the additional material from Ps 8 into our author's consciousness. It is not at all inevitable, however, that an awareness of 'son of man' as a Christological title provided the sparking

point, even assuming that it is valid in any case to see the phrase in titular terms¹²⁰. The phrase as used in Heb. 2:6 is anarthrous and no further reference is made to it anywhere in the Epistle. If there is an "echo" of a title, then it is surely no more than an echo. What mattered to our author was the message about Jesus and mankind he perceived to be contained in Ps. 8:4-6, and there is no firm indication, either here or elsewhere in the Epistle, that the message involved understanding Jesus as the titular Son of man. If, however, we were to share something like J. Bowker's understanding of the meaning of 'son of man' in Judaism and therefore in Gospel usage, then there might indeed be a significant link with the way the phrase is used in Hebrews. Bowker argues that in the Synoptic (particularly Markan) tradition, the two main strands of Jewish interpretation come together to give the sense of "man born to die who will nevertheless be vindicated by God"¹²¹. The phrase is thus, in effect, a statement about the condition of humanity, in natural terms and in relation to God. So, Bowker asserts, "the phrase itself in Hebrews, *ben adam*, draws attention to the connection with Adam's penalty of death in Gen. 3:19 and to the consequent succession of generations"¹²². Yet passages like Dan. 7 suggest that "man born to die" may nonetheless find a vindicator in God. This understanding makes Jesus as son of man the representative human being. Thus, citing the *ἄνθρωπος* in Mk. 8:31, Bowker comments, "it is indeed necessary that the son of man, man born to die, *should* die; the Genesis penalty of death is virtually universal... Jesus as the son of man must also die"¹²³. The story, of course, does not end there, for the son of man is raised up by God. Bowker sees a parallel duality of emphasis in Heb. 2. "It is worth noting", he says, "that Heb. 2:6-9 has exactly this understanding of the phrase, strongly associating it with death, but also drawing attention to vindication"¹²⁴. We might add that the death/vindication theme continues through the rest of chapter 2, both in respect of Christ and of humanity generally (cf. esp. 2:10, 14-17) and that the *σάρκα* of v. 10 could also be seen as the equivalent of the *ἄνθρωπος* of Mk. 8. The "children" share in "blood and flesh" (v. 14, a phrase underlining human frailty and finitude), many are in life-long bondage to the fear of death (v. 15), which is in the devil's power (v. 14). They therefore need radical help (v. 18) and deliverance (v. 14), such being supplied by a representative man who enters totally into human experience (v. 17), including that of death (v. 14), and emerges victorious, opening the way to "glory" (v.

10) for his "brethren" (v. 12). For the author of Hebrews, the wonder of all this is infinitely heightened by his conviction, so vividly communicated in chap. 1, that this "representative man" is the perfect expression of God himself. The Vindicator has submitted himself to vindication, with all the suffering that entailed - and this ὑπὲρ παντός (v.9).

Morna Hooker's thesis regarding "son of man" perhaps adds another potential dimension of understanding in relation to Hebrews. Like Bowker after her, Hooker argued for "a very close connection between the figures of Adam and the Son of Man"²⁵. She contended also, however, that "the idea which gave rise to the emergence of the Son of Man [was] that Israel was Adam's true heir"²⁶. The phrase 'son of man', then, in Jewish understanding comprehended not so much the whole of humanity as faithful and favoured Israel. Of the latter, Jesus was the supreme summary and representative - such, at least must be the implication of the persistent use of 'son of man' as a self-description of Jesus in the Gospels²⁷. On this understanding, υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου in Heb. 2:6 could be interpreted as portraying the divinely given dominion of Jesus and/or his "brethren" as the 'true heirs of Adam', 'true Israel' - and, indeed, we recall that in 2:16 it is σπέρματος Ἀβραὰμ ἐπιλαμβάνεται. We shall suggest below²⁸ that 'seed of Abraham' is to be understood as describing those who are faithful servants of God (cf. Is. 41:8 LXX), rather than being limited to the Jewish people - those servants constituting the extended

λαός of God, whom God can bring into glory because they are willing to follow the Pioneer.

That 'Pioneer' is, indeed, for our author the 'new Adam', the expression of God's new creation, the sign that God's breath-taking destiny for humanity can be realised in those willing to submit themselves to his creative activity. Thus, as Peterson puts it, "It is not an understanding of Jesus as [titular] Son of Man that underlies the use of Ps. 8 in Hebrews but the idea of him as head of a redeemed humanity in a 'new creation'"²⁹. Dunn also sees our author's understanding of Ps. 8 as being in an 'Adam context', a context, indeed, which is the key to the rest of the chapter. So, "Hebrews presents a classic statement of Adam Christology in Heb. 2:6-18... Christ as the one in whom God's original plan for man finally (or eschatologically) came to fulfil-

ment - that is in Christ-the-exalted-after-suffering one (the last Adam)"¹³⁰ P. Giles argues strongly for the representative significance of this interpretation and, in our view, rightly sees this as a pointer to the Epistle's exposition of Christ as the great High Priest. Her survey of the primary and secondary material leads her to the conclusion that it is "the representative ministry of Christ" which is at the heart of the writer's choice of Ps. 8:6 and that this representative ministry "in turn is very closely connected to our author's High priestly Christology"¹³¹.

If we accept that the verses from Ps. 8 in Hebrews relate to 'Representative Man', then the question of whether the exposition of the psalm concerns the figure of Christ or humanity generally becomes, in effect, a 'non-question', for it is a matter of 'both...and' rather than 'either...or'¹³². However, we must also take into account a textual issue which, depending on our assessment of it, might point us towards a less 'inclusive' interpretation. At Heb. 2:6, some MSS (notably p⁴⁶ but also C*P al b d bo) read $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ for $\tau\acute{\iota}$, giving $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$; G. Zuntz¹³³ accepts this variant and sees it as implying a Christological interpretation involving the ascription to Christ of the title Son of Man (i.e. the Messiah). Such an understanding requires further emendation of the text, for even those mss which include $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ retain an anarthrous $\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$ and $\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\upsilon$. So, Zuntz argues that the original would have read $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$ (the rough breathing supplying by crasis the definite article) $\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota \mu\iota\mu\eta\acute{\nu}\omicron\sigma\kappa\eta \acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\tilde{\eta}$ (the circumflex rendering the meaning 'truly', and thus introducing the answer to the question posed by the first phrase) $\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\upsilon \acute{\omicron}\tau\iota \epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\pi\tau\eta \acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$. "Who is the man whom thou mindest? Truly the Son of Man, for him thou visitest". This, Zuntz claims, "alone permits a coherent interpretation of this passage", and, into the bargain, "makes an end of that chapter of New Testament theology which is headed 'The anthropology of Hebrews'"¹³⁴. Our first reservation regarding Zuntz's reading must surely be whether such textual reconstruction is justified in view of the total lack of manuscript evidence beyond the opening $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$. The $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ in itself does not lead us inevitably to Zuntz's interpretation. If we were to accept it as original¹³⁵, we should not need to alter the

understanding for which we have argued above. It merely gives a more personal content to a question about humanity which remains essentially the same. To go further, by changing breathings, accents and punctuation, smacks of accomodating the text to a theory (or even, in the light of Zuntz's remark concerning the anthropology of Hebrews, to 'a bee in the bonnet!'). Moreover, we have to consider our author's use of Ps. 8 against the background of his use of the OT in the Epistle generally. We are inclined to agree with R.V.G. Tasker, "It is true that the *auctor ad Hebraeos* more than once makes deliberate changes in the text of the Septuagint, but that he should have played havoc with the parallelism of the psalmist in this way in the interests of a Son of Man Christology seems to me unlikely"¹⁷⁶. Our author is a careful stylist and poet as well as a theologian - and there seems little doubt from the rest of Heb. 2 and the Epistle as a whole that he is interested (passionately interested) in "anthropology". The humanity of Jesus and of those he came to help is one of the writer's fundamental themes, along with the glorious destiny of the Son and his "brethren".

5.5 2.8b-9

As we read Heb. 2:6-8, then, we encounter what is taken by the author to be a prophecy of the new order of creation 'incarnated' (as v 9ff. is to confirm and make clear) by the pioneering Jesus who leads the way for those who will follow. That new order is not different in *intention* from the old - God's purposes for humanity have not changed. The Psalmist has perceived rightly. Yet, God needed to do 'a new thing' in order to make his purposes capable of full realisation, in order to create that οἴκουμένῃ in which the brethren of the Son (new Adam) will share in his humble and rightly exercised dominion, a dominion infused with the χαρακτήρ of God. Even so, we are reminded in v. 8, that 'realised eschatology' is not, yet the order of the day: Νῦν δὲ οὐπω ὁρῶμεν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ὑποτεταγμένα. To whom, precisely, does the αὐτῷ of this phrase refer? To humanity - even 'new age' humanity - the phrase would certainly be applicable, the more so if those particular specimens of redeemed humanity addressed by the Epistle were facing severe hardship and persecution. Our author clearly has no space in

his understanding for that kind of triumphalism which is divorced from reality - a reality which involves testing and suffering for believers. The blessings and benefits of the new covenant are surely available in the present (cf. e.g. 10:19ff.) but the Christian is to be aware also that "these last days" have not yet reached their 'End', their consummation. Until Christ appears, $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\iota\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$ (9:28) his followers "have need of endurance" (10:36 cf. 6:11,12) and should regard their suffering as that "training" ($\pi\alpha\iota\delta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$) appropriate to God's loved children and used to enable them $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\lambda\alpha\beta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\tau\alpha\varsigma\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\acute{\omicron}\sigma\tau\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ (12:10 cf. 12:3-11). Even Jesus had to be "made perfect" (i.e. brought to a fulfilment of his vocation¹³⁹) $\delta\iota\alpha\ \pi\alpha\theta\eta\mu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omega\upsilon$ (2:10). His disciples cannot expect anything less. All things will not be subject to them until the new age is "fully operational", until, perhaps, they have been so thoroughly 'trained' that they are able to share God's holiness and so exercise their dominion aright. They must be content for a time ($\beta\rho\alpha\chi\acute{\upsilon}$)¹⁴⁰ to remain lower than the angels - but their destiny is to be in a relationship of authority over $\pi\grave{\alpha}\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$, including those heavenly beings whom Philo had specifically excepted from man's dominion¹⁴⁰.

We have argued above, however, that the $\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$ of the psalm quotation is seen by our author not only in terms of new age humanity generally but also of that humanity focussed in a Representative Person, Jesus. In what sense could it be true that we do not yet "see" everything in subjection to the glorified Jesus? The recipients of Hebrews would perhaps have only to look at their own situation. Jesus was evidently 'not yet' in control of all things because his enemies still flourished and made their presence felt. He had 'not yet' come again in glory to establish his rule. Indeed, in the light of their triumphalist expectations, he may have seemed so ineffective as to undermine the validity of their allegiance to him. How could a truly exalted Christ apparently exercise so little power? Our author meets this dangerous state of affairs by drawing attention to the glorious death of Jesus (so named for the first time in the Epistle) and its implications (2:9 10) - $\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \delta\epsilon\ \beta\rho\alpha\chi\acute{\upsilon}\ \tau\iota\ \pi\alpha\rho'\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \eta\lambda\alpha\tau\tau\omega\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\upsilon\ \beta\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\mu\epsilon\upsilon$
 $\iota\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \delta\iota\alpha\ \tau\omicron\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\theta\eta\mu\acute{\alpha}\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\alpha\upsilon\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \delta\acute{\omicron}\xi\eta\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\iota\mu\acute{\eta}$
 $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\epsilon\phi\alpha\upsilon\omega\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\upsilon$. We do not now,

he argues, perceive the reality of the Lord's fully exercised sovereignty. In

the mysterious purposes of God, this is still "not yet". "These last days" in which we are living (1.2) are a waiting time (9:28) and must be so in some way for Christ as well as for his followers (cf. Heb. 1:13; ἕως ἄν θῶ — τῶν ποδῶν σου - and 10:13, "henceforth expecting until his enemies are made a stool for his feet"⁴¹). Yet, even with our limited human vision, we do already "see" the incarnate and crucified Jesus, and our seeing needs to be informed by an awareness that even here - especially here - shines the "radiance of God's glory". It is a very "Johannine" understanding. The suffering death of Jesus ὑπὲρ πάντων is the *occasion* of his being "crowned with glory and honour". His 'coronation' is not *post eventum* but simultaneous with τὸ πάθος τοῦ θανάτου, though he himself was perhaps at the time too taken up with "enduring" to be consciously aware of the truth of this (cf. Heb. 12:2).

F.F. Bruce, however, would reject any identification between Jesus' death and his crowning with glory and honour, maintaining that "it is difficult to fit the interpretation into the context of the general argument of this epistle, in which the glory is consistently presented as the sequel to the passion"⁴². He cites only 12:2, which in fact makes references to χαρά rather than δόξα. Indeed, when we examine the use of δόξα in Hebrews in relation to *Christ*, we find that its overall context is *not* exaltation after death but rather the eternal "condition" of the Son of God. So at Heb. 1:3, as we have argued above⁴³, οὗς ὡς ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης points to the eternally continuous character of the Son's expression of God's glory. It is always so, all through his incarnate experience as well as in his heavenly life. In 3:3 we find both δόξα and τιμή applied to the Son and here the context is the Son's inherent entitlement to glory and honour because of who he is. The ascription at 13.21 (ὡς ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων) is ambiguous but if we take it as referring to Christ, it underlines, by an affirmation of its appropriateness, the eternal character of his glory.

It is in the light of these instances that we should see the use of δόξα in 2.9. There is no doubt that our author gives much attention to the exaltation of Christ at God's right hand but this is not described in terms of his being *endowed* with glory. It is the "sons" and not the Son who are led

" εἰς δόξαν " (2:10) - into their destiny as prophesied by the psalmist. The Son *already* radiates his Father's glory. How then can he be said to have been "crowned with glory and honour" (στεφανωμένον note the perfect participle: this 'coronation' is lasting in its effect)? Surely in the sense that in Jesus "the suffering of death" both "crowns" the revelation of God's incarnate glory and wins that victory over the devil and death (cf. 2:14, 15) which reverses the effect of Adam's fall, thus meriting a victor's crown. Στέφανος and στεφανόω are often used in scripture and elsewhere¹⁴⁴ to describe the crowning of a victor in a contest and here in Heb. 2:9 the eternal Son of God and incarnate second Adam wins the ultimate victory in the battle between life and death. We see him wearing his victory wreath on the Cross and we are reminded perhaps of the ἀκάνθινος στέφανος mentioned in the Passion narratives (Matt. 27:29, Mk. 15:17; Jn. 19:2, 5)¹⁴⁵. Michael Ramsey discerns particularly rich echoes in the Johannine tradition, with its presentation of the crowned Jesus as ὁ ἀνθρώπος and βασιλεὺς. "There are those", he says, who "have been irresistibly reminded of the Johannine story of the trial of Jesus before Pilate. 'Behold your king': 'Behold the man', says Pilate as Jesus stands robed in purple and crowned with thorns"¹⁴⁶. At his trial and supremely on the Cross, for the Fourth Evangelist Jesus expresses representative humanity and humiliated yet paradoxically triumphant kingship. The author of Hebrews, we might suggest, sees a similar picture: the new Adam, victorious and crowned in death, opening up the divine destiny of humanity, the king whose glory and honour is to be seen in his suffering. Our author is in no doubt that Jesus' kingship is the kingship of the eternal Son of God (cf. 1:8-9). His throne is for ever and ever, yet even so, when he was made lower than the angels, suffering was integral to the revelation of his kingly glory - for it revealed the essentially self-giving character of his (and therefore God's) majesty. That character, we learn later in the Epistle, is also to be seen at the heart of his royal priesthood. If the Hebrews community was disillusioned because of Christ's apparent lack of power and the threat of severe suffering for themselves, then they must discover again the heart of their faith - they must "see Jesus" and in him see the true character of God and the nature of their own vocation. That message would be even more telling if it were delivered in a context where the community were met together to celebrate the glorified kingship of Christ.

It is interesting - and possibly theologically significant - that two different verbs for 'seeing' are used in 2:8-9 (in v. 8, ὄρωμεν , in v. 9, βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν). Westcott comments, "The change of the verb... cannot be without meaning. βλέπειν apparently expresses the particular exercise of the faculty of sight... while ὄραν describes a continuous exercise of it"¹⁴⁷. Such a distinction applied here would seem to imply that our attention needs to be particularly focussed on the incarnate and glorified-through-suffering Jesus, for we cannot yet continuously enjoy the vision of the totally sovereign Son (and therefore of his redeemed "brethren"). Alford has a rather different understanding, referring to "the difference between the half-involuntary ὄρωμεν ... the impression which our eyes receive from things around us, - and the direction and intention of the contemplating eye... in βλέπομεν "¹⁴⁸. So, seeing Jesus "crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death" is with the eye of faith, whereas noting that all things are not yet in subjection to him (which Alford takes to mean 'man') is an observation so obvious as to require little conscious effort. One problem here is that ὄραν is used elsewhere in the NT (and even more importantly elsewhere in this Epistle) in the sense of contemplating or perceiving that which is supernatural, notably God or the risen Christ (cf. e.g. Matt. 5:8; 1 Cor. 9:1; 1 Pet. 1:8; 1 Jn. 3:2; Rev. 22:4). At Heb. 11:27, Moses is described as enduring $\text{τὸν γὰρ δόρατον ὡς ὄρων}$; at Heb. 12:2, the addressees are urged to be $\text{ἀφορῶντες εἰς -- Ἰησοῦν}$ and at 12:14 they are to pursue that holiness $\text{οὐ χωρὶς οὐδεὶς ὀψεται τὸν κύριον}$ (cf. 9:28 where Christ $\text{ὀφθῆσεται τοῖς αὐτοῦ ἀπεκδεχόμενοις}$). It would seem that for our author ὄραν has much to do with spiritual perception and attention and that its use in 2:8 is thus to be viewed in this context (so Arndt & Gingrich, p.582), though the element of physical seeing is not to be excluded. We do not yet see, either by spiritual perception or physical sight, all things in subjection to the Son or redeemed humanity. But we βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν . Our author's use of βλέπειν in the rest of his Epistle is an interesting mixture. At 3:9 it occurs in quotation from Ps. 95:9 , where it refers to the children of Israel seeing God's works in the wilderness, at 3:19 its meaning is, in effect, the understanding that comes from considering the evidence: $\text{βλέπομεν ὅτι οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν εἰσελθεῖν δι' ἀπιστίαν}$,

at 10:25 it is used in the sense of perceptive anticipation of an event in the future: βλέπετε ἐγγίξουσιν τὴν ἡμέραν and at 12:25 it takes the form of an hortatory command: βλέπετε μὴ παραιτήσῃθε τὸν λαλ-
οῦντα. At 2:9, then, it would seem probable that our author is exhorting his readers to focus the kind of attention on the crucified Jesus (whom like the exalted Jesus they have not seen with their physical eyes) which will bring deeper awareness of the divine glory shining through suffering. They are being pointed, in fact, to a new way of seeing which will help them to endure the trials of the "last days" - a way of seeing which has its focus in the death of that *human* Jesus who is at the same time the ultimate revelation of the nature and purposes of God. It is a way of seeing which will lead them into the mystery of Jesus' high priesthood.

Snell, indeed¹⁴⁹, sees a very particular element of preparation on the part of our author in suggesting that the phrase 'glory and honour' in 2.9 might also carry echoes for the writer (and addressees?) of what is said in Ex. 28:2 about Aaron's High priestly array (καὶ ποιήσεις στολὴν ἁγίαν Ἰσραὴλ τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου εἰς τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν). The author of Hebrews is certainly familiar with Pentateuchal literature regarding priesthood and indirect allusions would not be contrary to his style¹⁵⁰. Moreover, the theological implications of this particular allusion would undoubtedly be attractive to him: the "apparel" (including the 'mitre') which displays the 'glory and honour' of Jesus the High Priest is made up of no less than τὸ πάθος τοῦ θανάτου. One of the purposes of Aaron's glorious array was the avoidance of death in the presence of God (cf. Ex. 28:43). Jesus accepted (albeit with "loud cries and tears", 5:7) his vocation to taste death ὑπὲρ πάντων - and precisely *therein* lay his high priestly glory. Whether or not our author *consciously* intended this comparison, it is surely latent in his text. The work of a creative thinker or artist always carries with it possibilities beyond those contained in the creator's conscious mind, for he/she brings to birth not a 'machine', rigidly delineated in terms of construction and operation, but a creation which is (to

borrow a phrase of our author's) "living and active", encouraging those who come into contact with it to enter into *relationship* with it, knowing and being known. Such a relationship can produce challenge and change as well as the constant potential for fresh depths of awareness. The NT documents, our Epistle included, are very much this kind of "creation". Of course, this presents us with the difficulty of discerning what is unfounded fancy and what is the good fruit of genuine encounter - but it is a difficulty which should be gratefully embraced by those committed to increasing exploration of the text. One important criterion of discernment (which Snell's suggestion seems to meet) is perhaps that of consistency with the author's overall message and approach.

It is in this light that we should consider some further allusions discerned by L.S. Thornton. He argues¹⁵ that there is an implicit connection between Heb. 2:5-18 and Wisdom 18:20-25 (interpreting Num. 16:46-50). The Wisdom passage talks of the "blameless" (ἄμωμτος) Aaron's intercessory ministry on behalf of the righteous subject to death, of his victory over "the destroyer"? (ὁ ὄχλος) and of the symbolism of his apparel (in his "long garment was the whole world and in the four rows of the stones was the glory of the father graven and thy Majesty upon the diadem of his head", 18:24). Though the vocabulary is by no means the same, there could be said to be some association of ideas. As Aaron saved the people and "destroyed the destroyer", so Jesus ("God saves") was God's agent of salvation who destroyed him who had the power of death (Heb. 2:9, 10, 14). As Aaron's long robe represented the whole world, so Jesus acted ὑπὲρ παντός (2:9). As Aaron wore God's Majesty "upon the diadem of his head", so Jesus was "crowned with glory and honour" (2:9). Thus the way was prepared for the explicit description of Jesus in 2:17 as the high priest who makes expiation for the sins of the people - and who goes much further than Aaron in identification and sacrifice.

Had this particular comparison been at the front of our author's mind, he would surely have quoted the Wisdom passage. Yet the association of ideas remains and perhaps forms part of that "hidden agenda" which is inherent in

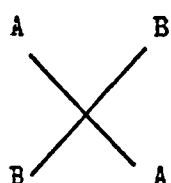
most creative productions. Further, there is little doubt that the writer knew (and applied to Christ) other parts of the book of Wisdom (cf. e.g. 7:25, 26) and if he and at least the majority of his addressees were Hellenistic Jews then the likelihood of an assumed and influential awareness of the document becomes so much the greater.

Thornton is perhaps on firmer ground when in discussing the "curious sequence" of 2:9 (i.e. death-glory-death) he finds a clue in the fusion of two images of great power - Adam and the Servant. So, he suggests, "the death sentence upon Adam with its entail of suffering for all mankind finds its remedy in the glory of the Servant; and this is then manifested in and through the Servant's surrender to a death for all"¹⁵². The "curious sequence" has certainly occasioned a good deal of comment by scholars. Why should so careful a writer as our author express himself in such an apparently confusing way? Rescuing him from the charge of carelessness can involve us in a variety of permutations. We could argue, for example, that the first two clauses go together: (having been made a little lower than the angels... because of the suffering of death), thus making *death* the *purpose* of the incarnation, clause three (crowned with glory and honour) marking the *consequence* of passion and clause four (so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone) "gathering up the full object and purpose of the experience which has just been predicated of Jesus"¹⁵³. Alternatively, "because of the suffering of death with glory and honour crowned" could be seen as one clause, thus defining the cause of Jesus' subsequent glorification¹⁵⁴. This still leaves the final clause as problematical, unless it be taken as summing up the whole verse. Spicq contends that it does in fact follow fittingly after the mention of Jesus' "coronation", for the "crowning of Christ... attests the success of redemption. In other words, the saving efficacy of the death of Jesus was consummated, consecrated, and in a sense ratified by his glorification. The latter is an integral part of redemption and permits Christ in his state of glory to apply the effects of salvation to men"¹⁵⁵. Yet this does not seem to fit easily with a *purpose* clause (ὅπως --- γεύομαι θανάτου) which can surely only apply to the incarnate Jesus.

Some see Jesus' crowning with glory and honour as being a reference to the Transfiguration, after which he set his face to go to Jerusalem (cf. Lk. 9:51). A.E. Garvie argues that our author had this in mind at 2:9 and that the purpose of this "foretaste of heaven" was to prepare Jesus for the 'exodus' he had to accomplish ὑπὲρ παντὸς¹⁵⁶. 2 Pet. 1:17 provides us with some encouragement to think along these lines, as in a apparent reference to the Transfiguration the author uses the phrase λαβὼν γὰρ παρὰ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν. It is an attractive possibility but, as so much attention is focussed on the event of the death of Christ in 2:9-10 (indeed in 2:9-18) it is perhaps more likely that the 'crowning' should be taken as being in much closer proximity to the death. Further, the Transfiguration is closely associated with the title 'Son' which at this point our author has laid aside in favour of 'Jesus', a name he clearly associates with human suffering¹⁵⁷.

P.E. Hughes regards the sense intended by the author as "We see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, so that by the grace of God he might taste death crowned with glory and honour"¹⁵⁸. The 'vision' referred to is thus essentially that of the exalted Jesus. The reason for the 'confusing' order, says Hughes, is our author's use of "the literary arrangement of ideas known as chiasmus, in which on the one hand the two outer clauses or concepts and on the other the two inner ones belong together in sense"¹⁵⁹. So, diagrammatically,

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where A = having been made a little lower than the angels
so that by the grace of God he might taste death
for everyone

B - because of the suffering of death
with glory and honour having been crowned

Such inverted parallelisms may well be the key to our author's meaning here but that does not necessarily imply that his meaning is focussed on seeing Christ in glory. The two clauses of B might after all be simultaneous rather than consequential (so making all four clauses relate to the same essential point, i.e. the death of Jesus) in which case Thornton's postulation of the influence of a combined Adam/Servant image might repay further consideration.

The Isaianic Servant had a divinely bestowed glory (cf. Is. 52:13 LXX) which was not recognized by men or "ἀπὸ οὐδενὸς ἀνθρώπων" (Is. 52:14). From this perspective, his visible form (εἶδος, v. 14) was without glory (δόξῃ, v. 14), indeed was ἄτιμον καὶ ἐκλεῖπον παρὰ τοὺς οὐδὲν τῶν ἀνθρώπων (53:3) and therefore the Servant (παῖς) was dishonoured (ἡτιμάσθη, 53:3). Yet he was viewed in a rather different light by God, being God's agent of salvation through bearing the sins of many. This is surely at least reminiscent of the one whom God crowned δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ because of the suffering of death ὅπως χάριτι Θεοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσῃται θανάτου (Heb. 2.9). Such redemptive glory and honour is certainly not easy to discern from a human point of view. It does indeed require a new way of 'seeing' and one that involves a deeper understanding of the character of God. In tasting death for everyone, Jesus was fulfilling the vocation and expressing the glory of the prophesied Servant. More than that, he was not only God's παῖς but, in a very special sense, God's οὐδὲν ἰσὺς and as such he revealed the radiance of God's glory (cf. 1:3).

Interestingly, there is another possible allusion to Jesus as the Servant a few verses on from 2:9, and it bears the same message. At 2:16 we read that σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ ἐπιλαμβάνεται¹⁶ and we are then told of his total identification with his brethren and his ability to bring them help (δύναται --- βοηθεῖν). This points us, perhaps, to the 'Servant Song' in Is. 41:8ff., where God addresses his servant as σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ -- Οὐδὲν ἐντελεβόμεν ἀπ' ἄκρων τῆς γῆς (41:8, 9), urging his παῖς not to fear and to remember his presence and his help, Πλὴν φοβοῦ, μετὰ σοῦ γάρ εἰμι -- ἐβοήθησά σοι (41:10). Heb. 2:16-18 could be seen at least in part as describing the fullest expression of the Isaianic prophecy. In Jesus

his υἱός, God has come to be with his people, identifying with their needy condition (2:17), delivering them from fear of the ultimate enemy (2:15) and offering them the kind of help which will exactly meet their situation (2:18). He takes hold of (ἐπιλαμβάνεται) his people to bring them aid¹⁵² and this does indeed involve incarnation. This latter sense given to the verb by a number of early Fathers (e.g. Chrysostom cf. others in more recent times¹⁵³) is surely (in view of the whole context of 2:14-18) to be included in any broader understanding of the word. God's characteristic helping of his people (an ongoing reality) is expressed in particular events, like the Exodus, referred to in Jer. 31 and quoted at Heb. 8:9 (ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπιλαβομένου μου τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου), and, ¹ supremely, in that incarnation which is the focus of our author's attention throughout most of Heb. 2. Here God helps his people by becoming one of them. The fact that Jesus has taken over as 'subject' from the God of Is. 41:8ff. (it is Jesus who takes hold of, who delivers from fear, who helps) and the Christology implied by the Epistle's opening statement point to the conclusion that *God himself fulfils in Jesus the vocation of the Servant*, and the consequences of that are indeed eternally present (cf. the present tense of both ἐπιλαμβάνεται and δύναται - - - βοηθῆσαι 2:16 & 18).

It may be helpful at this point to recall that there is an almost certain representation of Jesus as the Suffering Servant figure at Heb. 9:28: ὁ Χριστός ἅπαρ προσερχθεὶς εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας (cf. Is. 53:12). The allusion comes in such a way (almost incidental) as to suggest an assumed familiarity with this understanding of Christ.

If God in Jesus fulfils the vocation of the Servant does he also according to Heb. 2:9 recapitulate and redeem in his Son the experience and destiny of Adam?¹⁵⁴ The total context of 2:5-18 would seem to encourage us to consider this as a possibility. We have argued above¹⁵⁵ that our author uses the Ps. 8 quotation to point to the true vocation of humanity as summed up in the Representative Jesus, the new Adam. The rest of chapter 2 highlights the cause, character and consequences of the representative's human experience. Its cause was God's desire to bring "many sons to glory", to make possible the

"salvation" of that humanity which he had both created, and created for himself (2:10). Its character was total identification (2:11, 14, 17, 18). One who was out of the depths of God's eternal Being became "brother" to finite and created human beings, sharing their suffering and temptation (2:10, 18). The results of this were radical (2:18). By his trustful obedience (2:12, 13), the human Jesus broke the power of the devil, sin and death (2:14, 15, 17), thus liberating mankind (those at least who would accept and follow the way of escape) from the consequences of Adam's primal failure. This 'new Adam vocation' surely holds true whether or not we interpret the $\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$ of 2:11 as referring to the first Adam¹⁶⁶. Nonetheless, the latter understanding (which would parallel the clear meaning of $\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$ in Acts 17:26) would reinforce that 'solidarity' of Jesus with his "brethren" (cf. 2:14) which our author seeks so urgently to communicate.

In this context, 2:9 could be seen as, in effect, a summary statement of the second Adam's purpose and achievement. He is referred to here for the first time as 'Jesus' - and it is no accident that our author chooses this moment to begin using a name which evidently means much to him (and perhaps to his community¹⁶⁷), speaking deeply (to him at least) of the real human experience of God's Son. He uses the unqualified name 8 times (2:9; 3:1; 6:20; 7:22; 10:19; 12:2; 12:24; 13:12), usually in an emphatic position at the beginning or end of a phrase, and it invariably points to the crucial significance of the human suffering and death of Jesus. Such emphasis would be given added point if (as we have argued above in chapter 3¹⁶⁸) the Hebrews community had been giving unbalanced attention to the confession, 'Jesus is Lord'. At 2:9, it is the human Jesus ($\beta\rho\alpha\chi\acute{\upsilon}\tau\epsilon\ \pi\alpha\rho'\alpha\gamma\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \eta\lambda\kappa\tau\omega\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\nu$) who is the true focus for what is prophesied of mankind in Ps. 8. This human Jesus experiences the penalty of the first Adam's sin ($\tau\omicron\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\theta\eta\mu\alpha\ \tau\omicron\hat{\upsilon}\ \theta\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\upsilon$) but, for those with eyes to see, it is an experience of glory not shame, for Jesus enters into it $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\epsilon\rho\ \pi\alpha\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma$. He not only identifies with the human condition, he cuts a way through the consequences of its failure and opens up the possibility of the fulfilment of Adam's original destiny and dominion, as set out in Ps. 8. The new Adam thus draws the sting of old Adam's fall - but it is only by taking the sting into

himself. He is indeed "crowned with glory and honour" - but he is so crowned in "the suffering of death". At the moment of death, he is king of creation.

The concentrated material of 2:9, then, opens up a wealth of possibilities, many of which are at least consistent with our author's overall message, and, indeed, can be seen as helping to prepare the ground for his presentation of Jesus as great High Priest. This is true particularly of the allusive images of Adam, Suffering Servant and King. We suggested above in chapter 3¹⁶ that, although these could be seen as key concepts in our author's thinking and message, they were not in fact the original spring-board for his perception of the priestly character of Jesus. Rather, he saw them as feeding into this perception, gained through worship - as it were, filling out and enriching the picture. He realised, too, perhaps, that they might be of considerable value in opening the eyes of the community to his new way of seeing Jesus. All these understandings of the significance of Christ were likely to be familiar to his addressees (they would 'catch' the allusions) and all three were inherently 'representative' in character: Adam representing and incorporating fallen humanity, the Servant representing and redeeming God's sinful people, the King representing and expressing the character of God's chosen people. So Jesus, in combining in himself the vocations of these three powerful figures of Jewish tradition, and fulfilling God's highest purposes for them, became *par excellence* the Representative, not only of God's chosen people but also of the whole of mankind. As second Adam, suffering servant and King, he tastes death ὑπὲρ πάντων. It remains for our author to show how this comprehensively representative vocation of Jesus can be expressed in terms of another representative figure of great significance - the High Priest. By the time Jesus is described as such in 2:17, the writer has already dropped some broad hints as well as using allusive imagery. At 1:3 he has described the Son's earthly ministry by the 'priestly' phrase καθιερισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιούμενος¹⁷⁰. At 2:11 he refers to Jesus as ὁ ἱερεύων, a term which points strongly to sacerdotal activity; and we have seen that the figure of Aaron may be lurking behind the 'major' imagery of 2:9¹⁷¹.

Yet his community has ultimately to be led to the conviction that 'a greater than Aaron is here' and for this, too, his opening two chapters lay the

groundwork. The high priestly vocation of Jesus breaks 'rules' and the boundaries of Jewish tradition. He is from the 'wrong' tribe (cf. 7:14) and yet he can perfectly represent the whole of mankind before God, not only as king of David's line but as king of creation (cf. 1:1-3, 8, 13; 2:7-9), not only as representative of the house of Israel but as the 'new Adam' summary of the true character of divinely created humanity (cf. 2:5-9), not only as the offeror of sacrifice but as God's true Servant who redemptively offers himself (cf. 9:28). Such would be cause enough for wonderment and commitment to discipleship, but according to our author there is more - much more. The one who can perfectly represent mankind can also *perfectly represent God*. For the servant is also the Son, and Son in a far more specialised sense than Adam or the King (cf. chap. 1). This fully representative High Priest expresses the nature and activity of God himself (1:1-3). *Jesus the Son expresses that priesthood which is at the heart of God.*

Chapter 6

Hebrews 1 and 2: an exploration of their message

(3) Hebrews 2:9-18

6.1 2:9 (cont'd)

If such indeed be our author's message, then he is unlikely to have written that Jesus tasted death $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ (2:9). This reading is found in M 424^c 1739 Or^p Eus Theod^{m-p}, cod apud Hier, Ambr. As F.F. Bruce puts it, the variant "is so obviously *lectio ardua* as to call for consideration". Though the MSS evidence is not strong ($\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\tau\epsilon\iota$ is found as early as p⁴⁶), many of the early Fathers (notably Origen and Theodore of Mopsuestia, though not Chrysostom) worked with $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ as the preferred and 'normal' reading. So Origen writes: "In some copies of the epistle to the Hebrews this passage runs: 'for by the grace of God'. Well, if 'without God he tasted death for everyone', he did not die simply for human beings but for the rest of rational creatures as well; and if 'by the grace of God he tasted death for everyone', he died for all except for God ($\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$)".² Taking $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ as excepting God from the purpose and effects of Jesus' atoning death is a common interpretation amongst those who see $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ as the original reading (cf. e.g. Bengel³, Ewald⁴, Ebrard⁵) and those who see it as a secondary gloss (cf. e.g., Tischendorf⁶, Tasker⁷, F.F. Bruce⁸). Paul's words in 1 Cor. 15:27 are felt to provide an explanatory parallel. Commenting on Ps. 8:6, Paul argues "But when it says "All things are put in subjection under him", it is plain that he is excepted who put all things under him" ($\delta\eta\lambda\omicron\nu \delta\tau\iota \epsilon\kappa\tau\omicron\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon \dot{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\tau\acute{\alpha}\xi\eta\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon \kappa\acute{\alpha}\tau\alpha \nu\omega$). Thus the author of Hebrews, or a later scribe⁹, wished "to exclude God from the inclusiveness implied in $\dot{\upsilon}\pi\epsilon\rho \pi\alpha\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma$ "¹⁰. Such an interpretation would certainly make some sense - and would fit the way our author generally uses $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ elsewhere in his Epistle (i.e. as a word signifying exclusion¹¹). However, the authenticity of this $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ reading still has to be set against the distinct paucity of good MSS evidence, suggesting, perhaps, that a 'later gloss theory' is far more likely, despite the 'more difficult reading criterion' (which is certainly

not infallible!). Further, as Delitzsch points out¹², if $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ was meant to except God from the atonement, we would have expected to encounter the phrase after $\upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho \pi\alpha\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma$, not before. For some commentators, moreover, "it is scarcely conceivable that anyone would have imagined that 'for everyone' without such an explanation might have included God"¹³.

Other interpreters take a rather different line, arguing that $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ implies that the divine nature of Jesus did not die (cf., e.g., Fulgentius¹⁴, Vigilius¹⁵, Anastasius Abbas¹⁶). Quite apart from the fact that such a notion is to be found nowhere else in the Epistle (and arguably, indeed, flies in the face of our author's christology¹⁷), one would have expected it to have been expressed in rather less awkward Greek. Our author is generally very careful about his language and would surely have used a clearer phrase such as $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma \tau\eta\varsigma \Theta\epsilon\omicron\tau\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma$.

There is also a line of interpretation which associates $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ with a particular theology of atonement¹⁸. So A. Snell, in opting for the authenticity of $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma$, argues that "it fits the view that this Epistle takes of the Passion"¹⁹, i.e. that Jesus had to deal with sin "by himself" (Snell accepts $\delta\epsilon \epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omicron\upsilon$ in 1:3), he had to be separated from God to save God's holiness and satisfy his wrath. In support, Snell cites not only 1:3 but 5:7ff; 12:2 and 13:12. At none of these points, however, is it argued by our author that Jesus was separated from God. Even if we accept $\delta\epsilon \epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omicron\upsilon$ at 1:3 (and there is reason enough to *question* its authenticity²⁰) it would still have to be placed in the total context of the Epistle's opening sentence, which emphatically proclaims that ontological relationship between God and his Son which is *continuously* true²¹. Thus his cleansing of sin was done through that "self" which expresses the radiance of God's glory. 5:7ff. tells us much about the relationship between Father and Son during "the days of his flesh" but nothing about a severance in that relationship. The clear implication of v. 7 is that God saved Jesus $\epsilon\kappa \Theta\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\upsilon$. However, precisely, we understand that phrase²², it surely means that God was in some way *involved* in the death of his Son and that, at the very least, contact was maintained. It is difficult to see how 12:2 can support Snell's thesis. It points us to the extreme suffering and significance of Jesus' death but there is no hint that this

includes the absence of God. So it is also with 13:12. This verse talks of Jesus suffering "outside the gate" so that he might sanctify the people, $\text{ὡς τὸ ἵδιον αἷματος}$. Our author did not, however, describe the isolation of Jesus and the shedding of "his own blood" in order to tell us of the withdrawal of God. The comparison and contrast is with animal sacrifices and the Jewish high priesthood. The message drawn is that the followers of Jesus should be prepared to accept such exclusion from the Jewish community and to bear "his reproach".

It is, in fact, extremely difficult to find any point in Hebrews at which Jesus is even implied to have died "separated from God" (as Montefiore translates $\chi\omega\rho\iota\varsigma \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ ²³). It will not do, either, to adduce in support of such an interpretation Jesus' cry of dereliction on the Cross, recorded at Matt. 27:46 and Mark 15:34 (so Snell²⁴, Montefiore²⁵, Elliott²⁶). That cry does not in any case have to be seen in terms of actual separation²⁷ and there is certainly no evidence that it has exerted any direct influence on our Epistle (at 5:7 Jesus cries out to God to save him from death, a prayer more reminiscent of Gethsemane than Calvary). Our author does quote from Ps. 22 (v.22) at 2:12, but there is no indication of Elliott's suggestion that he would have had the first verse of the psalm in mind when he wrote 2:9. One could equally well posit extended influence to other OT passages referred to in chap. 2. Neither does our author's use of $\chi\omega\rho\iota\varsigma$ elsewhere lend support to the separation theory (again, pace Snell and Montefiore). It is true that $\chi\omega\rho\iota\varsigma$ occurs with some frequency in Hebrews (13 times in all) but in no case is it linked with the absence of God from Jesus at the point of his death.

We may say, then, that there seems to be no compelling reason why $\chi\omega\rho\iota\varsigma \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ should be read as original at 2:9. The only interpretation of this phrase which can be seen as consistent with our author's theology is that which takes it as an exception clause. We must ask, therefore, whether the reading $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\tau\epsilon \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$, much more strongly attested in the MSS evidence, links in more powerfully to the writer's argument. Montefiore clearly thinks not. According to him²⁸, $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\tau\epsilon \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ "is a bald phrase, not particularly suited to the context and uncharacteristic of our author." Yet the word $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$ is certainly not uncharacteristic of our author. He uses

it on 7 other occasions (4:16 {twice}; 10:29; 12:15; 12:28; 13:9; 13:25). Of these, 12:15 refers explicitly to the "grace of God" (ἐπισκοποῦντες μή τις ὑστερῶν ἀπὸ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ); 4:16 (προσέρχόμεθα -- τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος -- καὶ χάριν εὐρωμεν) and 10:29 (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνυβρίσας) by implication associate *χάρις* very closely with God; and 13:9 (καλὸν γὰρ χάριτι βεβαιοῦσθαι τὴν καρδίαν) is in the context of trusting God's help as expressed in Jesus (vv. 5-8) rather than being beguiled by "diverse and strange teachings". 12:28 (ἔχωμεν χάριν δι' ἧς λατρεύομεν εὐαρέστως τῷ Θεῷ) may well have a stronger sense than merely being "grateful" (RSV)²⁹ and 13:25 (ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν) is surely not unconnected with the God extolled in 13:20, 21, who can raise from the dead and work in his people that which is well-pleasing in his sight. "Grace" in our Epistle, then, seems to have a great deal to do with the character and activity of God - with his power to help (4:16; 12:15; 12:28; 13:9; 13:25) and his holy response to the rejection of that help (10:29). And it is clear that, in our author's belief, this help is closely related to Jesus and his suffering and death (see esp. 4:16 cf. vv. 14-15; 10:29 cf. the rest of the verse; 13:9 cf. vv. 8-12; 13:25 cf. vv. 20, 21). Thus it could be seen as "fitting" that in 2:9 Jesus should be said to have tasted death for everyone "by the grace of God". It underlines our author's conviction that the God who saves has spoken and acted ἐν υἱῷ. We recall that the Epistle's opening two chapters (as indeed the document as a whole) are thoroughly theocentric³⁰. God not only initiates the incarnation. Throughout the human experience of Jesus, it remains true that God is expressing *himself* in his Son. In the absence of any hint to the contrary anywhere in the Epistle, we must assume that this is also true - supremely true - of the death of the Son, by which God's power (and motivation) to save are both demonstrated and realised. The God of this Epistle is the one who is consistently the "helper" of his people, the one who never fails or *forsakes* (cf. 13:5, 6) - and this is surely shown forth in his identification ἐν υἱῷ with their human experience of death. Indeed, our author might well have endorsed Frances Young's contention that "atonement is no more and no less than the presence of God in the midst of all that denies him"³¹, death being the prime candidate. As Spicq comments on 2:9, "Ainsi se manifeste fortement le théocentrisme théologique de l'épître"³².

What is also manifest from 2:9 is the comprehensive yet individualised significance of the death of Jesus. He tasted death (and this, *pace* Chrysostom, Aquinas, Luther et al., means that he experienced it *fully*³³) ὑπὲρ παντὸς. Are we to understand παντὸς as masculine or neuter genitive singular? If neuter, then it might "stand for the collectivity of the redeemed who in faith have come to Christ"³⁴, the use of the neuter singular in Jn. 6:37-40 being adduced in support. We might question, however, whether at this point our author had only believers in mind. If he is presenting Jesus as a second Adam figure, then his understanding is likely to be more universal - more akin perhaps to Paul's meaning at 1 Cor. 15:22 (ὡς περ γὰρ ἐν τῷ Ἀδὰμ πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν -- ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ πάντες ὡσποιοῦνται).³⁵ So Jesus fulfils the destiny of every human person - and in a dual sense. He shares the 'destiny' entailed in mankind's fallen condition, i.e. death - yet the manner of his death is such that it overcomes the devil's power (2:14, 15), so releasing humanity from the 'fear of death' and making possible the realisation of God's glorious destiny for mankind (2:10). In dying, Jesus entered into a universal human experience but through death he also did "on behalf of every human person" what no other human being could do - he broke the stranglehold of sin and the devil, the entail of Adam's failure. Now everyone can enter into the benefits he has won, though our author is clearly well aware that not everyone will choose to do so. But the "many sons" of God (2:10), the "brethren" of Jesus (2:11, 12, 17), the "children" of God (2:13), the "seed of Abraham"³⁶, "the people" (2:17) consist, potentially at least, of the whole of humanity, for they have been "taken hold of" by the definitive expression of him ὁ ὢν τὰ πάντα καὶ ὁ ὢς τὰ πάντα (2:10). This God is comprehensive in his creative activity - and in his purposes for his creation. Indeed, many of the 15 usages of πᾶς in chapters 1 and 2 underline the divine inclusiveness (cf. 1:2, 3, 6; 2:8 {three times}, 9, 19, 11, 17).

Such an emphasis renders immediately attractive the view of some of the early Fathers (e.g. Theodoret and Eucherius) that ὑπὲρ παντὸς points to the cosmic significance of Jesus' death. He died on behalf of everything that God has made, thus opening the way to that "glorious liberty" spoken of in Rom. 8:19ff. in relation to a creation in bondage to decay. We have already argued that our author is concerned with the reality of comprehensive new

creation (ἡ οἰκουμένη) - yet here in 2:9, his words perhaps have a more personal focus. Certainly in vv. 10-18 it is Jesus' relationship with *humanity* that is uppermost, and it is human beings whom he primarily delivers from bondage (2:15). Further, when our author talks of the totality of creation he invariably uses the plural of πᾶς (cf. e.g. 1:2, 3, 11; 2:8, 10). At 2:9 he is most concerned to communicate the universality of the scope of Christ's death in terms of humankind - and within that, to stress that Jesus died on behalf of every person as their Representative.

6.2 2:10

This is endorsed in v. 10 by a statement of "fittingness" in the context of the character of God³⁶, the God θεὸς τὰ πάντα καὶ θεὸς τὰ πάντα. Interestingly, our author has already referred to the Son as the one θεὸς καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας (1:2). We are being pointed again to the essential relatedness between God and the one through whom he expresses his creative activity. And it is through this one who became the incarnate expression of himself that he redeems his human children. Having absorbed what was claimed in chapter 1, we are intended to be in no doubt that when we "see Jesus", we see God in action - a God for whom creating and redeeming are thoroughly "fitting"³⁷. Because of who he is, he is directly involved in both activities. It was fitting, too, that this God should make the ἀρχηγός of humanity's salvation perfect through sufferings. Why should this be so? Remembering our author's "high Christology", are we to conclude that (to use modern terminology) there is 'sado-masochism' within God? Or is the reference here to the meting out of the necessary punishment for sin by a just God before he can redeem? Theological investigation of the phraseology of v. 10, seen in the context of the surrounding verses (and the Epistle as a whole) suggests that a rather different interpretation is called for.

It is clear, firstly, that the purposes and motivation of God's "treatment" of the ἀρχηγός was actively positive, i.e. the bringing of many sons into glory. We have suggested above³⁸ that πολλοὺς is to be seen (at least potentially) in universal terms as indicating the whole of humanity. God,

then, regards human beings as his "children" (cf. 2:13, 14), an idea which may well link up with the Genesis traditions concerning Adam³⁸ and male and female made in God's image. There was a special and close relationship from the beginning and the influence of this claim in the Genesis creation narratives is surely not far beneath the surface of Hebrews 2 (it is inherent anyway in Ps. 8).

God's "sons" were made for "glory" (cf. 2:7). Artur Weiser's comment on Ps. 8:5 perhaps helps us to understand something of this in terms of the message of Hebrews: "the king of the universe has even gone so far as to install man as the king of the earth and to 'crown' him with the regalia of 'majesty and glory' which really are the attributes of God's own presence"⁴⁰ [not author's italics]. The glory intended for God's sons is no less than their sharing in the life and 'vocation' of God himself. They were indeed made to be "gods" and "sons of the Most High" (Ps. 82:6 cf. Jn. 10:34-36). Yet because of sin they had to "die like men" (Ps. 82:7). Their destiny could not be fully realised. Our author sees God as acting to remedy this situation - and doing so in a way that befitted his nature.

As T.B. Fretheim has made clear⁴¹, it was a significant feature of the character of the Jewish God to identify and suffer with his people in bringing them his saving help. Fretheim writes, "It can reasonably be claimed that the idea of a God who suffered with his people had its roots in the Exodus and in the subsequent reflections on the significance of that event"⁴². He points to the importance of a passage like Ex. 3:7-8, where the Lord says to Moses, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people that is in Egypt and I have heard their cry... for I know their affliction. And I have come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians and to bring them into (εἰς εὐρυχωρίαν

) a good and wide land". It is this kind of God, testified to throughout the OT⁴³, that the author of Hebrews surely has in mind - the God who feels his people's affliction and responds by bringing them deliverance. What he does to redeem the whole of humanity from the bondage of sin and death to bring them into glory (εἰς δόξαν ἀγαγόντα) is thus 'in character', yet, as Hebrews also makes clear, it is unprecedented in scope and operation. For, in his Son, God has not just "come down" in theophany to appoint and

inspire a rescue leader for a particular portion of humanity, he has himself taken on "blood and flesh" (2:14) and tasted to the full his children's (i.e. humanity's) predicament (2:14-18). The ἀρχηγός who is the instrument of God's salvation is a far greater than Moses or Joshua (cf. chaps. 3 & 4), he is the enfleshed expression of God's very being. The "promised land" into which God leads his people is far greater than an earthly Canaan (pace Buchanan⁴⁴); it is no less than that new creation in which humanity's divine vocation to "glory" will be fully realised. It is in the light of these convictions that we should understand the 'perfecting through sufferings' of the ἀρχηγός. The 'sufferings' had to be experienced because they were inherent in the human condition yet they were endured to the end in complete obedience to the will of God (cf. 10:7, 9). The new Adam, the eternal Son become human son, though sorely tempted (2:18; 4:15), yet remained steadfast (4:15), thus fulfilling God's best purposes for humanity. It was in this that the ἀρχηγός was made perfect, a fully mature human being. As L.S. Thornton puts it⁴⁵: "The sinless Son of God, in becoming man, accepted all the conditions which belong to our nature in respect of moral and spiritual development... The spirit of obedient sonship was always His. Yet He submitted Himself to the discipline of learning in His own soul all that such obedience means if followed out to the end in such a world as this".

D. Peterson would take issue with such an interpretation. In arguing against Westcott and Vanhoye (who take a similar line to Thornton), Peterson asserts that "to give primary emphasis to the perfecting of Christ as man rather than as saviour, is to obscure the real focus of our writer in favour of a subsidiary theme... the primary sense of Christ's perfecting is his vocational qualification rather than his moral perfection"⁴⁶. Yet Peterson himself has already stressed the importance for the author of Hebrews of Christ as the "triumphant Man" and "Head of redeemed humanity"⁴⁷. Could it not after all be said that *both* understandings are meshed together in our author's phraseology? For to "qualify" as saviour, Jesus (according to Hebrews) "had to be made like his brethren in every respect" (ὥφειλεν κατὰ πάντα τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ὁμοιωθῆναι 2:17) and yet resist the enslaving power of sin (4:15). In this divine enterprise, soteriology and anthropology had to be wedded together to bear the fruit of new creation.

The precise meaning of ἀρχηγός is also a matter that has excited scholarly debate. The word (which can be understood in a number of different ways) occurs only four times in the NT and two of those instances are to be found in Hebrews (2:10; 12:2). The other two both appear in Acts (3:15; 5:31). At Acts 3:15 the context would seem to require the sense of 'author', 'source' or 'originator': τὸν δὲ ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς ἀπέκτειναντε, ὃν ὁ Θεὸς ἡγείρεται ἐκ νεκρῶν. The Jews, proclaims Peter, have *killed the author of life*, but God has raised him from the dead. It is a telling juxtaposition. At Acts 5:31, the meaning of ἀρχηγός seems to have a rather different emphasis. Here attention is focussed on the risen and exalted Christ at God's right hand: τοῦτον ὁ Θεὸς ἀρχηγὸν καὶ σωτῆρα ὕψωσεν ἐν δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ. W.R.G. Loader notes the apparent allusion here to Ps. 110:1, this, and the association of ἀρχηγός and σωτήρ, pointing him to Hebrews and to 2:10 in particular. "It is not impossible", he argues, "that both Luke and Hebrews are familiar with a tradition linking an allusion to Ps. cx.1 with the designation ἀρχηγός and σωτήρ"⁴⁰. Certainly Acts 5:31 would seem to point us towards other possible translations of ἀρχηγός, notably 'ruler', or even 'prince'. G. Johnston, indeed, argues that in all the NT references "ἀρχηγός is ... to be translated PRINCE. It represents one of the strands in the primitive Christology that saw Jesus as the fulfilment of the Davidic hope". In support, he claims that in the LXX, ἀρχηγός "almost always denotes leadership and the ἀρχεῖν of rule"⁴¹ and that this would have been the formative influence on its usage by "the Hellenistic congregations among whom both Acts and Hebrews must have circulated at first"⁴². Certainly many (around 50%?) of the LXX examples seem to refer to tribal rulers ("heads of the fathers' houses")⁴³ but even so, it is difficult to link any of these references very specifically to the "Davidic hope". Moreover, a considerable number of the remaining examples have to do with leadership which is not specifically associated with princely rule, often having the character of military leadership⁴⁴. On a couple of occasions it has the sense of originator or source (cf. Jer. 3:4 - of God; Mic. 1:13), the kind of meaning which Johnston himself identifies as being prevalent in the secular Hellenistic world of the first century AD - a world which presumably also encroached on those Hellenistic congregations addressed by Acts and Hebrews.

In the case of our Epistle, we suggest that the writer used the word 'inclusively', an approach that would befit his conviction of the comprehensive significance of Christ. So at 2:10, the ἀρχηγός is both originator and leader τῆς σωτηρίας. The connotation of leadership is certainly there. As Westcott points out⁵³, the use of ἀγεῖν suggests that the ἀρχηγός is closely involved in the process of leading into glory. He shows the way and clears the way into that σωτηρία which is the full realisation of humanity's destiny of glory, when they will share the life and dominion of God. It is perhaps significant, too, that in the great majority of Pentateuchal instances of the verb εἰσαγεῖν the reference is to God's bringing of the Israelites into the Promised Land⁵⁴. In his greater act of deliverance (bringing many sons into glory), God is far more closely identified with his human agent than during the Exodus. In his Son, the direct expression of himself, he was able to act more effectively than through Moses (cf. chap. 3). In Jesus, he was able to do what the former Jesus (Joshua) could not do, that is, make it possible for his people (made up of all who would follow) to enter into his full and final rest (cf. 4:1-11). Such κατὰ πᾶν οὐρανόν⁵⁵ marks the culmination and consequence of God's new creation. It is virtually synonymous with the δόξα and σωτηρία of chapter 2, furnishing a powerful 'link word' whereby our author can weave together familiar associations with the entry into Canaan and the consummation of God's work of creation (cf. a similar integration of Exodus and creation themes in the Isaianic tradition⁵⁶).

Ἀρχηγός is surely another such 'link word'. As we have seen, it certainly evokes a picture of courageous leadership. Taken with 2:14, it may also evoke the picture of a military champion ('captain', 'hero')⁵⁷ engaging with the enemy in the front-line. Given our author's repeated assertion that Christ has sat down at the right hand of God (cf. e.g. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2), his use of ἀρχηγός may indeed have some association with the notion of messianic, princely rule (cf. Johnston's thesis above), though we must remember that this prince was "crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death". The character of his 'rule' thus needs to be radically re-interpreted. If linked with 'the Davidic hope', it cannot be 'straightforwardly' triumphalist.

Whatever concept of leadership we discern at 2:10, it is linked directly with the action of God. It is God who leads many sons into glory and it is God who expresses his leadership in the ἀρχηγός who bears the very stamp of his nature. This ἀρχηγός was also the divine agent of the first creation (1:2), the one declared in 1:10 to have founded the earth κατ' ἀρχάς ⁵⁸. He is also the one who "having been made perfect became the source of eternal salvation" (τελειωθεὶς ἐγένετο -- ἄτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου 5:9). Such an understanding of his significance is surely to be discerned in his description as perfected ἀρχηγός of the salvation of many sons. As in chapters 3 and 4, so at 2:10 ideas of creation/new creation interweave with notions of leadership and deliverance to produce a telling picture of the saving activity of God in relation to his human children.

We recall that the whole verse is set in the context of the character of God as Creator - that God $\delta\epsilon\iota\kappa\nu\acute{o}\nu\tau\alpha\ \tau\alpha\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \delta\epsilon\iota\kappa\acute{o}\nu\tau\alpha\ \tau\alpha\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$ who expressed his creativity ἐν νύκτι (1:2). This is also the God who brings the firstborn into the world (εἰσαγάγῃ τὸν πρωτότοκον εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην 1:6). In discussing this phrase, we suggested that οἰκουμένη should be understood as the world of God's new creation (cf. 2:5) and that εἰσαγαγεῖν may well here have connotations of bringing to birth⁵⁹. The πρωτότοκος is to be seen as head of the new creation, both in chronological order and in pre-eminence, and is in this sense the firstborn of many brethren (cf. Rom. 8:29). Heb. 2:10 arguably has similar associations. In bringing many sons to birth into the new age (πολλοὺς υἱοὺς εἰς δόξαν ἀγαγόντα) God expresses his travail through the sufferings (διὰ παθημάτων) of that ἀρχηγός who is χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ (1:3). They suffer together because they are together, jointly engaged in that enterprise of creation which delivers God's children into the adventure of a new life once for all (cf. the aorist ἀγαγόντα). These children must, however, grow to a new maturity, as 4:12ff. indicates). The image of a 'travailing' God occurs a number of times in the OT scriptures⁶⁰. Commenting on one such (Isaiah 42:14-16), Fretheim remarks, "Just as God birthed Israel at the beginning of its life (Deut. 32:18), God will do so again... God, crying out, gasping and panting, gives birth to a new order. The new creation necessitates the suffering of God"⁶¹. As we have noted, Deutero-Isaiah, like

our author, weaves together motifs of creation and deliverance. For the writer of Hebrews, "the suffering of God" which delivers his children into glory is the death of his incarnate self-expression, the ἀρχηγός. In this capacity, the ἀρχηγός is the originator of that new and liberated life which constitutes a second ἀρχή of creation. His passion bears fruit in the rebirth of many sons, of whom the ἀρχηγός himself, as second Adam and the image of God, can be regarded as the firstborn (cf. 1 Cor. 15:33, Risen Christ as ἀπαρχή). It is significant, however, as L.S. Thornton points out²², that our author avoids saying that God brought the ἀρχηγός into glory, for as the eternal Son he is always ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης (1:3). That divine glory shines forth in the deathly travail through which his vocation to release humanity into fulness of life (σωτηρία) is brought to consummate completion, is made perfect. Such, argues our author, is characteristic (ἡπρεπεν) of the Creator God who, in delivering his suffering people, suffers with them.

Loader, in his previously cited article, underlines the interesting point that on both occasions when our author uses the term ἀρχηγός (2:10; 12:2) we find near at hand "τελείωσις terminology". This perhaps has rather more significance than the production of a "rhetorical effect of contrasting ἀρχή - and τελ - words (cf. 3:14 & 7:3)²³ - a significance which is theological rather than literary. Beginning and end, origin and fulfilment have their ultimate base in the God who generates them. So in the book of Revelation (a document which, as we have seen²⁴ has affinities with our Epistle), God declares in the context of a prophecy of the new creation that he is τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὡ, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος (21:6 cf. 1:8 and, of Jesus, 1:17, 18; 3:14). This conviction would certainly be shared by our author, who in 2:10 describes God as the source and goal of creation (δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα καὶ δι' ὃ τὰ πάντα). When it comes to the new creation, the new οἰκουμένη, this God acts 'in character'. He both initiates and brings to fulfilment that σωτηρία which opens up the new age of glory, and he does so in and through the ἀρχηγός, the true expression of his very self, whom it was fitting διὰ παθημάτων τελειῶσαι. Our author's terminology, then, stresses the comprehensive completeness of God's act of new creation - from beginning to end, from source to consummation.

6.3 2:11-13

That completed and new creation is further underscored and explored in 2:11-16, when the addressees are assured of the reality and totality of incarnation, including the profoundly liberating significance of Jesus' confrontation in death with the devil. Much of this section we have already considered above, for it is integral to the unravelling of what has gone before. Some points, however, remain to be made before we are ready to move on to the climax of the Epistle's overture - an overture which has rehearsed the document's fundamental themes and provided the key to our author's theology.

Throughout this section (as indeed throughout the Epistle), our author would have us remember that he who identifies so closely with humanity is at the same time the perfect expression of God. God is thus totally involved in the redemption, re-creation and sanctification of his children.

At 2:11, Jesus, the Son, is described as $\delta \ \lambda\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota\sigma\omega\nu$, the one who is sanctifying. The implications of this phrase are profound and variegated. From the OT it is clear that, as holiness belongs properly to God alone^{es}, only God can effectively 'sanctify' or make holy, either directly (cf., e.g., Gen. 2:3; Ex. 20:11; 29:43) or through chosen agents (cf., e.g., Ex. 13:2, 12; 19:14 - Moses; Ex. 19:22; 2Chon.30:24 - Aaron and the priests; Ex. 20:8; 28:34 - the people of God). Such chosen agents (especially the priests) have themselves to be carefully sanctified, hence the detailed provisions laid down for this in the book of Leviticus in particular. Because holiness has its source and perfection in a God perceived to be personal and concerned about attitudes and behaviour, it is understood in much of the OT scripture to have ethical connotations^{es}. Even in the Priestly traditions, ethical imperative is not infrequently integrated with ritual taboo in presenting the implications of God's holiness for his people (Lev. 19 is a good example of this).

The use of $\lambda\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota\sigma\omega$ in Hebrews is clearly closely associated with priesthood and sacrifice (as well as 2:11, see also 9:13; 10:10; 10:14; 10:29; 13:12). Yet our author's concern is far from being with cultic sanctity. Such

imagery is rather a vehicle (meaningful to both himself and his community) to express the radical comprehensiveness of what God has done in his Son to release men and women from the grip of sin, death and the devil, that is, to make them "perfect" (cf. 10:14), totally what God intended them to be. Perfection of this kind cannot be mere ritual purity. The sanctification it involves requires deep inner cleansing (cf. 9:14). As bodies are washed with pure water, so must hearts be true and sprinkled clean from any evil conscience (10:22). As Jesus has sanctified the people through his own blood (13:12), so must their sanctification be realised and exercised in steadfast allegiance and fruitful obedience (passim, but see esp. chap. 13). Indeed, the object of their sanctification is that they may partake of the holiness of God himself (12:10). According to Hebrews⁶⁷, 'being sanctified' has that quality (beloved of our author) of 'now' and 'not yet'. It is something that has happened by virtue of the death of Jesus (cf. 10:10, with its perfect participle passive and 10:29 & 13:12 with their aorists), yet it is also a continuing process (cf. the present tenses of 2:11 and 10:14). As Westcott puts it, "That which is true ideally has to be realised actually"⁶⁸. The sacrifice of Jesus has effected total cleansing and sanctification but such a blessing has to be appropriated. That can only happen as people 'draw near' to receive it in worship and respond to its consequences in obedience.

It is ministered, as all the Hebrews references make clear, by Jesus - in his death and, consequently, in his mediation of the fruits of his passion. And, unlike the 'sanctifiers' of the old covenant, his right to sanctify has not been temporarily delegated by God. Jesus can perpetually (cf. the present tense of 2:11) 'make holy', for he perfectly shares and expresses the holiness of God himself. Such must be the implication carried over from chapter 1. J.K.S. Reid's words regarding the general NT use of $\lambda\gamma\iota\sigma\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$ are certainly applicable here: "The proper subject of sanctification is not man but God ... Christ effects it in virtue of the equality with God which he enjoys"⁶⁹.

Yet at the same time, according to 2:11, he who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \epsilon\kappa\ \epsilon\kappa\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$. Whether this 'one' be God or Adam⁷⁰, this claim stresses our author's conviction that the eternal Son of God, the agent of creation (1:1-3), has in Jesus identified with created

humanity made in the divine image. He has thus become the brother of those human beings he was instrumental in creating, that they might realise (in both senses of the word) their original and divine vocation to express God and share his life (cf. Ps. 8). They are in effect an overflow of the divine being and they belong properly within God's heart. Only the one who is eternally from God's heart can restore them to their rightful place, can by an act of new creation open the way to glory for the children of God. Only he can make them holy with the holiness of God⁷¹. For he who sanctifies (ὁ ἁγιάζων) is one with him of whom Lev. 20:8 proclaims, ἐγὼ Κύριος, ὁ ἁγιάζων ὑμᾶς, as well as one with his human brethren.

In talking of Jesus' work in terms of sanctification, our author is undoubtedly preparing the way for his consideration of the high priesthood of Jesus (cf. 1:3)⁷². By the time this ascription is used in 2:17, the recipients should be in no doubt of the profound significance of Jesus' work and of his person. Here is no ordinary high priest. Here, rather, is a high priest who reveals the essentially 'priestly' character of God himself.

Verses 12-16 underline strongly the reality of incarnation and they do so in such a way as to evoke a number of OT images, no doubt familiar to our author's community through their knowledge of the Jewish scriptures, and their awareness of Christian interpretation. This Jesus is linked with the righteous and vindicated sufferer of Ps. 22 (Heb. 2:12), a figure clearly of some importance in the early Church's understanding of the Passion⁷³. In v. 13 Jesus is described as speaking with the words of Isaiah the prophet⁷⁴ (Is. 8:17b, 18a), expressing his trust in God and his 'solidarity' with the children God has given him. Those children are, in a sense, both God's and his⁷⁵, for he as eternal sharer of God's being was instrumental in their creation (1:3), yet as a human being, he has also identified with them as his brethren⁷⁶. As he shares the vocation of the sufferer of Ps. 22, so he enters into the experience of Isaiah the prophet, an experience which involved rejection by God's people and confident trust in a God "who has turned away his face" (8:17a cf. Ps. 22:1). In the view of our author, prophet and psalmist alike prefigure so closely the calling and experience of the Son of God that he can make their words his own.

It is interesting to note that Jesus, the vindicated suffering and faithful one, is presented here as being ἐν μέσῳ ἐκκλησίας (2:12). He who is exalted at God's right hand (1:3), he who is radiance of God's glory (1:3), he who sanctifies (2:11), is nonetheless perceived to be in the midst of his people - a paradox which had also been discerned, in relation to the holy God, by the prophet Hosea (cf. Hos. 11:9 - Θεὸς ἐγὼ εἰμι, καὶ οὐκ ἄνθρωπος, ἐν σοὶ ἄγιος). The notion of Jesus 'in the midst' was evidently important for the Matthean church (cf. Matt. 18:20, οὗ γὰρ εἰσὶν δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἑμὸν ὄνομα, ἐκεῖ εἰμι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν

), the context here, it seems, being issues of community relationships and discipline (cf. 1 Cor. 5:3f; 2 Cor. 13:3, 5⁷⁷). We might compare Rev. 1:13ff., where one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and a golden girdle and having the appearance of the Ancient of days⁷⁸, is seen by the visionary ἐν μέσῳ τῶν λυχνιῶν , those lampstands which represent the churches addressed by the Apocalypse. A glorious heavenly figure, yet 'in the midst' with recognizable humanity. It is a picture not very far removed from the understanding of the author of Hebrews. We may compare also Lk. 24:36, where the Risen Christ came to his disciples and stood ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν , stressing his continuing, though glorified, humanity and opening their minds to understand the scriptures.

At 2:12, the presence of Jesus among the congregation is very much in the context of worship - ἐν μέσῳ ἐκκλησίας ὑμνήσω σε. Hymning God's praise is coupled with the proclamatory function of announcing God's name to his brethren (ἀπαγγελῶ τὸ ὄνομα σου τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου). Here, then, Jesus is seen to be taking a leading part in the liturgical gatherings of the Christian community, both in praising God and in revealing to his brethren the nature and character (τὸ ὄνομα) of the God who is worthy of praise. In this latter respect, we may compare Jn. 16:25, where Jesus is presented as saying to his disciples (his "brethren" of Jn.20:17): ἔρχεται ὥρα ὅτε οὐκέτι ἐν παροιμίαις λαλήσω ὑμῖν, ἀλλὰ παρηγοίᾳ περὶ τοῦ πατρὸς That ὥρα ἀπαγγελῶ ὑμῖν. must surely be post-Resurrection⁷⁹. Indeed the context for this saying is the disciples' corporate⁸⁰ prayer "in the name" of Jesus, to be made after the trauma of his going away, his being seen again and the coming of (his?) Spirit. Moreover such prayer may well have to be offered in a time of perse-

cution and suffering (cf. 16:1-4). In that hour, and as they pray in his name, Jesus will tell them plainly of the Father, presumably through the *Παράκλητος*. Arguably, there are here significant linguistic, contextual and theological parallels with Hebrews. We note the occurrences in both Jn. and Heb. of the future tense of *ἀπαγγέλλω*, placed on the lips of Jesus. It is interesting, too, that we find in the quoted phrase from Jn. 16:25 a word which is of some importance for the author of Hebrews in relation to prayer and worship, i.e. *παρρησία* - that unambiguous honesty which, if we take in the full impact of the Johannine usage²¹, is apparently to characterise *both* sides of the divine-human encounter (cf. Heb. 3:6; 4:16; 10:19; 10:35; and compare Eph. 3:12; 1 Jn. 2:28; 3:21; 4:17; 5:14). Regarding context, both John and Hebrews may have had in mind a community at least open to the possibility of harassment and persecution and, within this, both passages seem to focus on the practice of prayer, either of petition (Jn.) or of praise (Heb.).

It is on the theological level, however, that the associations are most clearly marked. Both passages would appear to reflect a belief that the post-Resurrection Jesus communicates clear teaching about God to the brethren assembled for prayer. From the christologies expressed by both authors throughout their writings, it would seem that Jesus has the qualification and ability to do this because of who he is - that definitive expression of God who can be called in a very special sense God's Son (cf., e.g. Jn. 1:1-18; Heb. 1:1-13). He can thus tell clearly of the Father/declare God's name because he is the very embodiment of the Father's character. (Though the author of Hebrews is very sparing in his use of the actual word *πατήρ* in respect of God's relationship with Jesus, such an understanding is certainly implicit throughout the Epistle (cf. e.g., 1: 2, 3; 3:5, 6; 4:14 etc). For our author, as for John (cf. e.g. Jn 10:3-5, 27; 12:47-50), it is of great importance that the brethren hear and obey the God whom Jesus reveals and proclaims. In chapters 3 and 4, for example, they are strongly exhorted not to fall into the same kind of disobedient unbelief as the children of Israel in the wilderness, being reminded three times (3:7, 15; 4:7) of the words of Ps. 95:7: *σήμερον εἰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε μὴ σκληρυνήτε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν*. On the first occasion (3:7) the *αὐτοῦ* seems on the most natural grammatical reading to refer to Christ. He has been the focus of the preced-

ing six verses and, in particular, the main subject of the immediately preceding sentence. It is Christ's voice that they must hear, a voice which is indeed the voice of the living God (cf. 1:2). As Westcott aptly comments on 3:7, it is "the voice of God spoken through Christ", and he goes on to add, "The application to Christ of that which is said of the Lord in the Old Testament was of the highest moment for the apprehension of the doctrine of his Person"². Christ, for our author, does not merely speak of God: he speaks with God's own voice, for God has spoken "in a Son" (1:2). It is in this more ontological sense that he declares God's name.

His voice is perhaps to be heard most clearly "in the midst of the congregation", when the assembled community (the Son's "Household", 3:6) draws near in trust and boldness to the throne of grace. And if, as we argued in chap. 3 above³, the community was accustomed to giving glory to God by "confessing" liturgically the name of Jesus, it would be but a short step towards the conviction that Jesus was indeed in the midst of their worship and capable of proclaiming God's word through the various ingredients of the liturgy. It is clear, certainly, that our author believed that Jesus could speak directly through the Jewish scriptures (so 2:12, 13; 8:8-12?; 10:5-9)⁴ and this may well reflect a belief shared by his addressees in relation to liturgical reading of Scripture and preaching⁵. Perhaps, too, the utterance of prophecy was considered to be a medium through which Jesus could speak with immediacy⁶. We may compare the book of Revelation, where Jesus (who walks among the churches, 1:13ff.) speaks out directly to his people in the voice of prophecy (cf., e.g., Rev. 2-3; 22:12, 13, 16, 20) - and this in an overall context which is heavy with the setting and ethos of worship⁷.

The Hebrews 'community', then, in "confessing" Jesus (and probably, as we have argued earlier⁸, in so doing concentrating on his exalted status) may have 'expected' him to respond to their worship in a direct (possibly dramatic? cf. 2:4) way. Perhaps Ps. 22:23 was well known to them in this respect. If so, our author would be following his usual pattern in this opening section of his Epistle, of starting with the familiar and pointing away from it to truths that either needed to be rediscovered or entered into for the first time. Here he uses the psalm verse as a telling feature of his emphatic

reminder that Jesus was fully human in every respect, including suffering and temptation, and that his experience of incarnation characterises his lordly glory. Moreover, Jesus' 'high profile' in a worship setting is to be seen very much in this light. He is not so much the dazzling 'other-worldly' lord as the one who knows from the inside and cares about the pains and pressures of his people - the one who can bring them timely help(2:18). In this he most surely proclaims God's name, for such is the character of God, and in this he most surely expresses God's praise. He is, indeed, the exemplar for the exhortation given in 13:15-16: "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name".

Jesus in the midst of the assembly, playing a key part in worship and teaching, expressing praise and confident trust, communicating to his brethren the saving character of God - such a picture provides an excellent background for the portrayal of Jesus as merciful and faithful high priest (2:17), who identifies with the weakness and trials of his brethren, whilst at the same time providing the perfect deliverance which only God can bring. As we shall see, it is an understanding of high priesthood which both takes up and goes far beyond existing Jewish perceptions. It is, in fact, defined in the light of the experience of *Jesus*, particularly in the context of worship.

6.4 2:14-16

As we have already suggested²², two other OT images feed into our author's understanding in verse 14 to 16, those of Adam (vv. 14, 15) and the Servant of the Lord (v.16): representative figures who, when fulfilled by Jesus point suggestively to the character of his vocation as representative High Priest. In Jesus, our author is implying, there emerges a new humanity, focussed in one who, as servant, takes on himself redemptively the fallenness of the human condition.

6.5 2:17

Thus, by the time we reach 2:17, with its explicit reference to Jesus as High Priest, our 'mind-set' has been very carefully prepared by the author, for he is deeply concerned that we should see the right picture. The Jesus who is merciful and faithful high priest is the one portrayed to us in the previous exposition, the one who expresses fully the truth about God and humanity in all their interrelatedness. Such, surely, is the force of the ὁ θεὸς which introduces v.17. As Westcott puts it, "It marks a result which flows naturally... from what has gone before"⁹⁰. And what has gone before is meant to provide the interpretative key to our understanding of Jesus as High Priest. We are by this stage to understand that the ἀρχιερεὺς introduced to us in 2:17 is no "ordinary" High Priest, standing precariously between God and man. Here, rather, is one who unites them both in his own person and saving work. The theological implications of that claim are indeed far-reaching⁹¹.

As ἀρχιερεὺς, Jesus is described as ἐλεήμων --- καὶ πιστός. Neither adjective is used elsewhere in Jewish literature which might have been available to influence Hebrews⁹² to describe the High Priest. "Merciful" is, rather, consistently associated with God himself. Of the 18 instances of ἐλεήμων in the LXX⁹³, 13⁹⁴ refer to God and the remainder⁹⁴ focus on what God requires of man as a consequence of his own merciful character. The same emphasis applies when we consider related words such as ἔλεος (over 75% of references speak directly of God⁹⁵) and ἐλεέω / ἐλέειω (over 77% relate specifically to God⁹⁶). Again, they are *not* used to describe the characteristics of the High Priest. At Num.6:25, ἐλεήσῃ is within the context of Aaron's prayer for the Lord to have mercy. At Eccl.50:19, ἐλεήμονος is similarly a feature of God rather than of the High Priest who is offering sacrifice. In the NT, ἔλεος and its verbal forms deal overwhelmingly with the mercy of God, either in general terms (cf. Heb. 4:16) or as shown forth particularly in Christ⁹⁷. Apart from Heb. 2:17, ἐλεήμων occurs only at Matt. 5:7, closely connected with the merciful nature of God⁹⁸. It would seem likely, therefore, that the community addressed by Hebrews (particularly if we are right in assuming that they had a Jewish background)

would instinctively respond to the word 'merciful' by associating it with a quality of God.

The linking of 'faithful' with 'merciful'⁹⁹ would arguably encourage the same response with regard to πιστός. Certainly the combination of 'mercy' and 'faithfulness' in the LXX is a significant way of expressing the dependable compassion of God (cf. e.g. Deut. 7:9; Ps. 32:4, 5; Lam. 3:22, 23; Hos. 2:19, 20). The description of God as πιστός comes also at Deut. 32:4; Ps. 144:13; Is. 49:7; Jer. 49:5 and Hos. 5:9. In the NT epistles, the faithfulness of God or Christ is specifically proclaimed some 15 times¹⁰⁰, often in a way which suggests the influence of a (confessional?) formula. So at 1 Cor. 1:9, 10:13, 2 Cor 1:18, 1 Thess. 5:24, 2 Thess. 3:3, Heb. 10:23 and 1 Jn. 1:9 the word πιστός introduces a phrase which refers directly to God and/or some aspect of his character and activity¹⁰¹. Heb. 10:23 may serve as an important example: πιστός γὰρ ὁ ἐπαγγελῶμενος, faithful is he who promised (cf. Heb. 11:11). If the Hebrews community were used to such formulae in affirmation of the nature of God (perhaps in the context of worship) and were familiar with the Jewish Scriptures, then the likelihood of such associations being stirred up by the usage of πιστός in 2:17 is indeed quite strong.

Thus to describe Jesus as "merciful" and "faithful" underlines the message already clearly articulated by our author - that Jesus is the definitive expression of God himself. In Jesus the High Priest, God behaves in a way true to his nature, by ministering that tender compassion which one recent writer has argued is profoundly akin to mother-love¹⁰², and by proving absolutely trustworthy and dependable in his ministry¹⁰³ (cf. 3:2, 6 and compare 13:5f). Jesus, as 3:6 reminds us, was faithful ὡς υἱός, a Son whose "theological significance" has been clearly delineated in the opening sentence of the Epistle. His faithfulness is to be seen, then, as a showing forth of the divine faithfulness, his mercy of the same order as that dispensed at the throne of grace (4:16).

As we have said, mercy and faithfulness do not come across in the Jewish tradition as characteristics of the high priest. There is, however, an inter-

esting passage in 1 Sam. which may just have fed into our author's understanding. 1 Sam. 2:27-36 talks of judgement on the disobedient priestly line of Eli and the raising up of "a faithful priest" (ἐξ ἐμῶν πλοτῶν) "who shall do all that is in my heart and in my soul; and I will build him a sure house (οἶκόν πλοτῶν) and he shall walk before my Anointed for ever" (v. 35). According to Hebrews, Jesus is certainly such a faithful priest, raised up by God (cf. Heb. 5:5f), totally dedicated to God's will (cf. 10:5-18), having an eternal priesthood (cf. 7:23-25) and a "house" which is built by God (cf. 3:2-6). He also replaces the existing and imperfect order of priesthood (cf., e.g., 7:11-28). If contemporary understanding of 1 Sam. 2:35 associated the new priest with Zadok of Jerusalem¹⁰⁴, then there may even have been a thought-link with Melchizedek, priest-king of Salem. Nonetheless, the point remains that, for our author, the merciful and faithful high priest of 2:17 goes far beyond any existing Jewish perceptions of a new priesthood. Jesus does not inaugurate a new "house" in the sense of a new priestly dynasty, even one which will continue for ever¹⁰⁵. It is *he himself* who will continue for ever. He is thus unique. Even the mysterious Melchizedek is but a type, a shadowy reflection of the true and eternal royal High Priest (Heb. 7:3) who does no less than perfectly express the essential character of God. This latter certainly comprehends mercy and faithfulness, qualities which no other High Priest except Jesus is said to have exercised.

We would therefore take issue with Montefiore's comment on 2:17: "Jesus is described as merciful and compassionate. But God is conceived primarily as holy and just"¹⁰⁶. Our author would brook no such division. On the basis of his christology, that would amount to a division *within God*. When we look at the Epistle as a whole, it becomes clear that God and his Son share the same characteristics. As Jesus the Son is merciful, so is God the source of mercy and grace (4:16). As God is holy and just, so is Jesus the Son "separated from sinners" (7:26). Yet both God and his Son are eminently approachable (4:14-16) and in a way that contrasts sharply with access under the old covenant (12:18-24). In the Son, God expresses *himself* (1:1-3). If there is tension between mercy and holiness, it is, according to our author, a tension *integral* to God, a paradox to be accepted rather than understood. The God of compassion is at the same time "a consuming fire" (12:29). The God who can be approached with

all the freedom of *παρρησία* (4:16) must at the same time be worshipped "with reverence and awe" (12:28). The God who brings many sons into glory (2:10) is at the same time the God who will judge his people (10:30). It is this mysterious God who reveals himself in Jesus. At no point in our Epistle are God and Jesus set against one another. It is rather emphasized that they are united in character (1:3) and will (10:5-10).

What, then, did our author mean at 2:17 by using the verb *γίνομαι* in relation to Jesus' high priesthood? Does not this imply a significant "difference" between God and his Son? P.E. Hughes would certainly argue so. "The Son assumed human nature", he says, "so that he might become what otherwise he could not be, 'a high priest'"¹⁰⁷. We notice with interest that Hughes has added his own gloss to his quotation from the text, i.e. "what otherwise he could not be". For Hughes, then, high priesthood can only exist in the context of human nature, can only be exercised by a human being. In this view he would have a good deal of scholarly support, from the patristic period onwards¹⁰⁸. Theodoret sums it up neatly: *Οὕτε γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς ἡμῶν ὡς Θεὸς ἀλλ' ὡς ἀνθρώπος* ¹⁰⁹.

Others would want to locate Jesus' assumption of high priestly office in the period after his death. So W.H.G. Holmes maintains that Jesus' human life and experience were but the preparation and training for his priestly ministry in heaven and that 2:17 should be seen in this light. According to Holmes' interpretation, "Christ's priestly ministry begins after his death. At his death he was Victim"¹¹⁰. Moreover, Christ's ministry as High Priest in heaven consists in the offering of his sacrifice¹¹¹. Now it is fairly clear from our Epistle that Jesus is a heavenly High Priest (cf. e.g. 4:14, 15; 7:26; 8:1, 2). What is not so clear is the precise character of his heavenly ministry and when it began. We may say, however, that a passage like 9:24-28 does not encourage the view that Jesus continually offers up his sacrifice in heaven. Somehow his offering is "once for all". Neither is it evident from the Epistle as a whole that Jesus "became" High Priest only after his death. Indeed, when we examine those points in the text which seem to refer specifically to Jesus' becoming High Priest, we find that we are confronted with a tantalizing puzzle.

2:17 does appear to link Christ's high priesthood very closely with human nature and the need to expiate¹¹² humanity's sins. It is not clear, however, precisely when the "appointment" takes place. At the moment of incarnation? At the moment of death? After death? 5:5-6 offers little further elucidation on the problem. We learn from these verses that Christ did not glorify himself to become a high priest. He was, rather, exalted to this office by God. When this happened we are not told. The quotation of Ps. 2:7, echoing its use at 1:5, might seem to suggest that Christ's high priesthood is not entirely 'earth-bound' and is to be associated with his fundamental status as "son". Such a possibility is reinforced by the adjacent quotation from Ps. 110:4. Christ is declared to be a priest εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα after the order of the mysterious Melchizedek, introduced here for the first time and later to be described as having "neither beginning of days nor end of life" (7:13). An eternal dimension is thus to be incorporated in some way into our apprehension of the character of Christ's high priesthood. At 5:10, Jesus is described as προαγορευθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ. According to Westcott¹¹³, "The word προαγορεύειν (here only in the NT) expresses the formal and solemn ascription of the title to Him to whom it belongs". What is referred to here is thus recognition and formal confirmation of an existing title rather than its initial conferral. It is almost tantamount, perhaps, to a divine "Well done" on the completion of the Son's mission of salvation. Certainly, the association of the Son's high priesthood with the order of Melchizedek strongly implies a more than earthly significance.

There is a similar implication at 6:20, where Jesus is said to have entered into the inner side of the veil as a forerunner, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. The aorist participle γενόμενος would seem to suggest that Jesus' appointment as such a high priest, though everlasting in consequence, antedated his entrance into the sanctuary of heaven. This perhaps calls into question Westcott's neat analysis, that on earth Jesus fulfils the type of the Aaronic priesthood and in heaven that of the Melchizedekian¹¹⁴ unless one argues that the Melchizedekian appointment was simultaneous with the moment of entry into heaven. (We shall consider Christ's Melchizedekian priesthood further subsequently¹¹⁵).

The seventh chapter of Hebrews is no more explicit in the timing of Christ's becoming a high priest. After being assured that he does not 'qualify' for the Aaronic priesthood (7:11-14), we are told that he has become (γεγονεν) a priest, κατὰ δύναμιν ἱωῆς ἀκαταλύτου (v.16) and on the "oathtaking" of God (vv.20-21). It is questionable whether we are to understand the Son's "indestructible life" solely in terms of his resurrection from the dead¹⁶ or whether it has a wider reference, pointing to the divine Son's essential character in the context of eternity. Our author's linking of his statement with Ps. 110:4 would seem to suggest the latter, for the mysterious Melchizedek had "neither beginning of days nor end of life" (7:3). What is said about God's oath-taking (vv.20-28) might at first sight be seen as indicating a 'date of appointment' later than the giving of the law (cf. v.28 ὁ νόμος γὰρ ἀνθρώπους καθίστησιν ἀρχιερεῖς ἔχοντας θάνατον, ὁ λόγος δὲ τῆς ὀρκωμοσίας τῆς μετὰ τὸν νόμον υἱὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένον).

However, even Ps. 110:4, with its aorist ὤμοσεν leaves the exact chronology open to question. When did the Lord swear? Could our author be thinking of the quotation in terms of a public proclamation (and confirmation to the Son) of an already existing reality - akin, perhaps to the usage of Ps. 2:7 in the Epistle¹⁷? The Melchizedekian priesthood is indeed superior to the Levitical in a way that becomes apparent in time through its divine expression in Jesus (7:11-15). But its superiority (like that of the heavenly sanctuary) lies in its eternal character. It is thus totally "real" (like the ἀληθινὴ οὐκηνή of heaven) and always applicable, but in order that its potential in terms of the salvation of humanity might be realised to the full it has to be experienced in human terms. In this respect, the Son's high priesthood, like his vocation as Saviour, has to be "made perfect", so that it can be emphatically affirmed as appropriate by God (cf. 5:8-10)¹⁸.

That priesthood, chapter 8 makes clear, is not to be seen in familiar, earthly terms. Our author declares at 8:4 that if Christ were on earth "he would not be a priest at all". Priests on earth "who offer gifts according to the law... serve a copy and a shadow of the heavenly sanctuary" (8:4, 5). The heavenly High Priest, by implication, serves "the real thing" and it is against the background of this eternal ministry that he undertakes the specific task

of mediating a new covenant (8:6ff.). The making of this new covenant involved also the making of full atonement for human sin (chaps. 8-10) and to this end, Christ the High Priest offered a *unique* sacrifice - that of himself (9:26). We may say, perhaps, that though the Son's high priestly vocation was eternal in character, the need to deal with the human condition and open the way to glory required a very particular and unrepeatable exercise of his sacerdotal calling. It was 'a call within a call', and to be fully effective it necessitated incarnation and death.

Such, we would argue, is the perception lying behind 2:17. It was the need to expiate sins which produced the need to become human and within that context to offer the perfect sacrifice. Death was at the heart of this specific ministry of expiation, but neither this ministry nor his dying fully defines the nature of the Son's priesthood. That, we shall contend, has a much broader significance than the offering of sacrifice, for it reflects the fundamentally priestly orientation of God himself.

An important facet of this "orientation" is indeed the expiation of sins. When we look at the Septuagintal usage of ἱλίουκεσθαι - and this, rather than secular Greek, was surely normative for our author - we discover that in every instance God is the one responsible for the action of the verb¹⁹. Expiation of sins is his prerogative. Further, as H. Turner points out²⁰, in the LXX a new and broader meaning of ἱλίουκεσθαι has developed, i.e. to be merciful and, by extension, to forgive - and this sense is by no means confined to a sacrificial context (so e.g. 2 Kings 5:18; Ps. 24:11; Ps. 78:9 and , in the NT, Lk. 18:13). There is indeed a textual variant which suggests that ἱλίουκεσθαι in Heb. 2:17 was taken by some to have this broader meaning. The texts A and 33pc read the dative τῷ ἁμαρτίαις . The 'merciful' high priest thus becomes like his brethren in every respect so as to be merciful to their sins, to bring forgiveness. Though we might deny originality to the dative case of ἁμαρτίαις it is harder to deny that ἱλίουκεσθαι in its immediate context and with its strong Septuagintal connotations, does point to the merciful activity of God in expiating the sins of the people. The verb is always used in the LXX in relation to God's attitude and activity towards humanity. Never is it associated with the High Priest or his offering of

sacrifice. L. Morris' contention that ἱλίσκομαι is "a word which has to do with the averting of divine wrath"²¹ has therefore somehow to come to terms with a strong body of LXX evidence suggesting an emphasis on the opposite direction - on God's attitude towards mankind, rather than man's attempt to propitiate God's wrath. The examples Morris adduces in support of his view are all from Ecclus. (3:30; 5:6; 20:28; 28:5; 34:19?) and all involve the verb ἱλίσκομαι which, as Turner points out²², tends to be used in the LXX when a sense nearer the secular "propitiate" is required. Even so, of the instances Morris cites, only one (Ecclus. 5:6) could be interpreted as propitiating a person, and that involves an assumption that the verb is in the passive voice.

We are led to the conclusion that in Heb. 2:17 the reference is to a ministry appropriate to God, that of expiating human sin as an expression of the divine mercy. High priesthood such as this there had never been, for it involved the "incarnation" of that priesthood at the heart of God. The whole Epistle, indeed, heavily underlines its author's conviction that atonement is brought about solely by divine initiative and execution. This God does not wait to be propitiated. He enters into the human condition to effect its cleansing (cf. 1:3). Neither is there any hint of a propitiatory transaction within the being of the deity, such as that suggested by Delitzsch²³ or Hughes²⁴. The God of Hebrews may be "a consuming fire" (12:29) but nowhere is it suggested that his mercy is dependent on the propitiation of his wrath. Wrath there certainly is (10:29-31) but it seems to combine with his mercy to, as it were, "spur on" a mission of deliverance (2:10), a new covenant (8-10), a new creation (2:5-9). In this ministry, Father and Son are at one (cf. chap. 10), for the Son is no less than God's full expression of himself (1:1-3). The need to which God responds is the need to bring humanity into glory by the cleansing of sin, not his own 'need' to be propitiated²⁵.

It is of further interest to note that the form of ἱλίσκομαι used at 2:17 is the present infinitive. This fact seems to excite little discussion (or even mention) in the commentaries²⁶, though many commentators are concerned elsewhere to point to the significance of verbal tense in our author's argument. Their attention has perhaps been drawn away by the controversy

over the fundamental meaning of ἱλόνκεσθαι. Yet our author is generally careful about the verb forms he chooses. Why not an aorist here - or a perfect, which would retain the 'once for all' sense so important for the writer in relation to Christ's work of atonement whilst at the same time stressing its continuing effects? The use of the present stands out the more for its being surrounded in vv. 17 & 18 by aorists and perfects¹²⁷. Montefiore, in his brief comment, states that the present tense of the infinitive "simply describes Jesus' priestly function: it does not imply perpetual and continuing expiation"¹²⁸. Yet this seems to take insufficient account of our author's concern to *differentiate* between the existing Jewish priesthood and the character of Jesus' priestliness. So, in chap. 5, the writer uses a series of present tenses to describe πᾶς -- ἀρχιερεὺς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος (vv.1-4) but changes to aorists and perfects when comparing the priesthood of Christ (vv.5-10)¹²⁹. Westcott is perhaps nearer the mark when he argues of 2:17 that "the one (eternal) act of Christ (c.x.12-14) is here regarded in its continuous present application to men"¹³⁰. The making of expiation can be described as ever present because it emanates from the desire and ministry of the eternal God. It is always God's will that barriers to communion with him should be removed. That will had to be fully expressed at a moment in time to deal with the particular *Sitz im Leben* of sinful humanity but, as T.S. Eliot said of the incarnation, it was a moment "in and out of time", a moment in which should be apprehended the "point of intersection of the timeless with time"¹³¹. It is such a mysterious conception with which our author is grappling. He is convinced that an unrepeatable act of expiation has been made. He is convinced, too, that this act should be understood in the context of eternity and as eternally efficacious (in retrospect as well as prospect as 11:40-12:1 makes clear). Because of who Jesus is, the ministry of expiation he undertakes must be eternal in significance, for he is the direct self-expression of God (1:1f) and God always has within him the capacity to expiate, just as he always possesses the power to save (τὸν δυνάμενον σωζειν 5:7, and cf. σωζειν --- δύναται of Jesus at 7:25). The effects of his expiation must be infinitely continuous. The choice of a present infinitive at 2:17, taken with all the christological implications of what the author has said so far thus points us very firmly to the mystery and enduring quality of God's work of atonement in and through one who is Son. The apprehension of

this mystery is, for our author, a matter of 'drawing near', to receive God's ministry (4:16; 10:22) and to look into Jesus (12:2). Worship and experiences are primary if the 'truth' is to be grasped and realised in steadfast discipleship (cf. chap 12). We may compare 7:24, 25 where the permanence of Jesus' priesthood is stressed and present infinitives used to convey the eternal character of his power to save and his ministry of intercession.

6.6 2:18

Verse 18 of chapter 2 underlines both the reality of Jesus' humanity and his divine significance. He himself has suffered and been tested¹³². The construction of the phrase *πέπονθεν αὐτὸς πειρασθεὶς*, suggests that the suffering and the testing are to be thought of as one experience (cf. NEB "he himself has passed through the test of suffering"). What the author has said so far about the suffering of Jesus indicates that it is focussed in his death (2:9, 10). This is the critical test, in which Jesus (as new Adam) confronts "him who has the power of death, that is, the devil" (2:14) and (unlike old Adam) triumphs over him, remaining absolutely loyal to God (2:13) in embracing the worst the devil could throw at him, i.e. death itself (2:14). Such a surprising strategy broke the power of the devil's hold over humanity (2:15). For Jesus, it was a painful struggle, issuing not only in victory over 'the opposition' but in a lasting capacity to identify sympathetically and helpfully with those "brethren" facing their own testing times (cf. 4:15, 16).

The tantalizing question remains as to who exactly was doing the testing. In the light of the previous verses, the devil certainly seems to be heavily implicated - and elsewhere in the NT¹³³ (though not in the LXX) *πειράζω* is sometimes associated with the devil's activity. In the LXX, however, the verb is most frequently used to describe God's testing of his people or their testing of him¹³⁴. Such usage is carried over into the NT in a number of places¹³⁵ and should perhaps be discerned behind the references in the Gospels to the testing of Jesus by those hostile and unbelieving towards him¹³⁶. God's people still fail to trust and obey even when he 'visits' them in the person of Jesus. This theme is apparent, too, in Hebrews. Chapters 3 and 4,

in stressing the crucial requirement for Christians of faithful obedience, point to the failure of the post-Exodus Israelites as a salutary lesson. That failure had involved putting God to the test (3:9, quoting Ps. 94:9 LXX). Christians must beware of following this example, urges our author, or they will jeopardise their prospects of entering into God's rest. The exposition of Ps. 94:7-11, and indeed the whole thrust of the Epistle, suggests that the 'testing' of God as far as Christians are concerned is to be located in a lack of wholehearted trust in the "great salvation" (2:3), the "new covenant" (9:15) wrought by God in Jesus through his sacrificial death. Perhaps, then, the 'testing' of 2:18 incorporates the notion of God being tested by his people - for Jesus, we remember from the Epistle's prologue, is God's definitive self-expression.

The other definite usage of $\piειράζω$ in Hebrews comes at 11:17³⁷, where Abraham is described as $\piειράζομενος$ in the matter of offering up Isaac. We are surely here to understand that God is doing the testing. Such a sense might well be applicable to 2:18, for it was, after all, God who made Jesus perfect through sufferings (2:10), and, as we have previously noted³⁸, God is the dominant subject of the first two chapters. For our author, Jesus is, *par excellence*, the representative of God's people, the example of patient faith. He must therefore enter totally into their situation and be tested to the limit, that his offering might indeed be that of a totally consecrated life and so be totally effective (cf. 10:5-10). He proves to be all that God requires, a perfect Son, and can therefore be the perfect agent of God's purposes of redemption. He can also be of real help to the new people of God when they face their painful testing which is elsewhere described in terms of divine $\piαιδεία$ (12:5-11), a discipline administered by God, which proves them to be sons and proves them as sons.

In the end, we may say that all three possible sources of testing may well be bound up in the $\piειράσθεις$ of 2:18. If the test referred to is supremely that of Jesus' death, then in the theology of Hebrews, all three 'contenders', in their differing ways, could be seen to have their part to play. In his death, Jesus, as new Adam, confronted the devil (2.14, 15) but this confrontation, viewed from another angle, could be seen as God's "perfecting"

of his Son through the testing $\pi α λ δ ε ι α$ of suffering (2:10; 5:8; 12:3-11). Further, as the self-expression of God (1:1-4), Jesus bears in human form the consequences of the testing hostility and rebellion of God's people (12:2, 3; 13:12, 13). And all these facets blend together, for the notion of the incarnation which our author is endeavouring to express (cf. e.g. 2:14, 17; 4:15; 5:7ff.) involves an experiential union between God and humanity. The author's vision here, as in other areas, is an inclusive and integrated one.

Jesus' experience of testing suffering means that he is able to help ($\beta ο η θ ῆ ν α ι$) those presently being tested ($τ ο ῖ ς π ε ρ ι ρ α ς ο μ ῆ ν ο ι ς$). $\beta ο η θ ε ῖ ν$ is heavily used in the LXX to describe the kind of help looked for from God²² and this is arguably the sense in which it should be taken at Heb. 2:18. It would be consistent with the author's christological thinking and with his usage elsewhere of the related words $\beta ο η θ ε ι α$ (4:16) and $\beta ο η θ ὁ ς$ (13:6, quoting Ps. 117:7 LXX). 'Timely help' is dispensed at the 'throne of grace' and the community is urged to remember that the Lord is their helper. So at 2:18, it is divine help which is being offered to those facing crisis, help which is infused with 'inside knowledge' of the pain of testing.

6.7 Summary

It is indeed not without significance that in the two verses which form the climax of our author's opening statement a number of words strongly associated in Jewish tradition with God are used in relation to Jesus: merciful, faithful, make expiation, able to help (perhaps, also, one facet of 'tested'). The cumulative effect of these (particularly for a community steeped in things Jewish) would point clearly and boldly in one direction - a direction already mapped out in the opening verses of the Epistle and suggestively indicated in the subsequent exposition: a direction which led to an understanding of Jesus as expressing in human form (and indeed in eternity) that which is appropriate to God. The consideration of his high priesthood thus emerges out of a context which has confidently asserted the divine import of the one who is Son, of Jesus. Yet it has also (especially in chapter 2) so

expounded this import as to stress the presence of suffering as well as glory in the divine adventure of incarnation. God in his Son has fully embraced the human condition, not shirking any of its consequences. By so doing, he has made possible a new humanity, freed from the power of sin and death, and capable of being brought into that 'glory' which is its true destiny.

It is against this background (cf. *ὁ Θεὸς* 3:1) that our author urges his community to "consider" Jesus as High Priest (3:1), for only so will they begin to apprehend the profound implications of this understanding of Christ. *The first two chapters of the Epistle, then, are fundamental to the writer's convictions about God and Jesus. Any consideration of his subsequent presentation of Jesus as great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek must take them fully into account.*

Our analysis has indicated that in these opening chapters, the author has skilfully made use of his community's existing knowledge and experience and begun to 'stretch' their insight and understanding. This he has achieved in a variety of ways. His presentation has built very much on Jewish scriptures and traditions, not to mention Jewish methods of exegesis. He has also woven together a wide range of already familiar Christian teaching. At the same time, however, he has radically re-interpreted and developed some elements of this teaching (cf. e.g. his use of Ps. 2:7) and employed Jewish material to which no other NT writing apparently refers (cf. e.g. Ps. 45:7f). We have suggested that his particular and comprehensive perception of Jesus 'came together' in the context of Christian worship, to which he brought his own 'personal agenda' and his acute awareness of the critical situation of his community. It was in this context that he came to "see" Jesus as High Priest, an understanding which for him brought into a unified focus the significance of the one who had drawn him into worship and faith. It was an understanding, also, which he felt had an urgent message for those tempted to fall away from full-blown (and dangerous?) Christianity.

A liturgical context, then, has produced a picture of Christ with strong liturgical associations. The way in which our author conveys this picture to his community is, as has frequently been observed⁴⁰, heavily 'sermonic' - and

as John Goldingay has pointed out¹⁴¹, the essence of a sermon is that it emerges out of worship and leads back into worship. Such would certainly be true of our author's "word of exhortation" (13:22)¹⁴². Whether or not it had originally been delivered orally as a homily or series of homilies, in written form it was surely designed to be read out to the community assembled for worship - and delivered as a homiletic "word of exhortation" rather than read as a letter¹⁴³. We have seen that even in the first two chapters it alludes to a number of words and phrases which may well have been familiar in a worship setting. Indeed, the tenor of the whole work could be described as an urgent call to wholehearted and faithful commitment to be expressed primarily in reverent worship and confident drawing near to the throne of grace. All else follows from this.

It is thus of supreme importance that the God to whom the community draws near is properly perceived. Hence that strong 'theological' emphasis we have already noted in the Epistle. From the opening chapters the community is left in no doubt that the God to be worshipped is the one who has expressed himself fully and finally in one who is Son - in Jesus - in Jesus, the merciful and faithful high priest. They are to understand that, as L.S. Thornton puts it, "the priesthood of Christ is the priesthood of God incarnate"¹⁴⁴. The implications of that claim, as our author later admits (6:11-14), are hard to digest, but pastor and preacher as he undoubtedly is, he uses a variety of approaches to encourage his people to make the effort, for he is convinced that it could make all the difference to their eternal destiny.

Chapter 7

The High Priesthood of Jesus the Son of God:

its character and theological message

7.1 Introductory

"This writing is no mere collection of theological commonplaces. The writer is not repeating but creating theology". So claimed A.B. Bruce' of our Epistle. It is a claim with which we would concur, though we would want to stress that the author's creation was not *ex nihilo*. Our exploration has suggested the presence of a good many 'raw materials'. Yet what has emerged from our author's worship and reflection is something adventurously novel - something 'more' than even the sum total of these raw materials - something focussed in an understanding of Jesus as great High Priest. That understanding has profound theological consequences, for when we probe its significance for our author's understanding of *God* (and it is God with whom the Epistle is primarily concerned), we find a picture which expands horizons and sees God in a different and daring perspective.

The first two chapters of the Epistle form the essential backcloth for this picture. Here (to change the metaphor) lies the key to our author's theology. Having examined the contents of these chapters, we shall now investigate how in the remainder of the Epistle, their major implications are carefully drawn out and drawn together in the presentation of Jesus as great High Priest. The latter, we shall argue, constitutes, as it were, a unitive category of interpretation. We shall then ask what this teaching implies concerning the character and activity of God, concluding our study by

sketching in a possible context for the emergence of such a 'pioneering' document as our Epistle.

Firstly, from chapters 1 and 2 we highlight five Christological perceptions which, together, lay the main theological groundwork of the Epistle.

7.2 Priesthood and Sonship

The notion of Jesus as God's Son is clearly of great significance for our author. It is proclaimed emphatically in the opening sentence of the Epistle and is reinforced and further defined by the rest of chapter 1. We have argued above² that our author sees the sonship of Jesus in terms of an ontological relationship with God which stems from eternity. We also suggested that right from the outset of his Epistle, the author is seeking to make a pregnant link between the sonship and the priesthood of Jesus, a link which he hopes will develop and bear fruit as his 'word of exhortation' proceeds. So in his first sentence he refers to the one who is Son having made purification of sins (1:3)³; and at 1:8-9 he uses, as spoken of the Son, a psalm quotation which anticipates the royal, righteous and eternal character of Christ's Melchizedekian priesthood⁴.

When we examine the references to Jesus as Son outside of chapter 1, it quickly becomes apparent that they are closely associated with the significance and character of his priesthood. Five out of the eight references present us with this association in a very direct way. The other three reinforce it by implication and suggestion.

7.21 3:6

Χριστός δὲ ὡς υἱὸς ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ.

In 3:2-6, our author uses Numbers 12:7 to make a comparison between Moses the faithful servant and Christ the faithful son. Moses was faithful in (all)⁵ God's house as a servant, Christ as son. The christological implications of this comparison are

indeed fascinating. Verses 3 and 4, for example, would seem to suggest that Jesus has been counted worthy of the glory due to the builder of the house (v.3), who can be none other than God himself (v.4)*. The faithful son, Jesus, is thus identified with God in a way which befits the one "through whom he made the world" (1:2). The οἶκος our author has in mind appears to be both a 'household' (the original sense in Num. 12) and a 'structure' (cf. vv. 3 & 4). Like 'old' Israel (cf. 8:8, 10), the Christian community constitutes God's household or family (v. 6 οὗ οἶκός ἐσμεν ἡμεῖς and compare 10:21- τὸν οἶκον τοῦ Θεοῦ cf. also 1 Pet.1 4:17). Yet at the same time we are perhaps to understand the word in terms of that 'new Temple' imagery which we find elsewhere in the NT and which relates closely to our author's concern with 'true' priesthood and sacrifice. Οἶκος is frequently used of the Jerusalem Temple in Jewish writings⁷ and in all four Gospel accounts of the cleansing (Matt. 21:13//Mk. 11:17//Lk. 19:46//Jn.2:16, 17). The Johannine version issues in a mysterious assertion about the temple (καὶ οὗτο) of Jesus' body being destroyed and raised up. Jesus, it is effectively being claimed, is, in the truest sense, his Father's house* (vv 16, 19), the place where God most fully reveals himself*. So it is in the understanding of the writer of Hebrews, for the Son is the ἀπαύγασμα of God's glory (1:3), the one who is counted of as much honour as the builder of the house (3:3), the one in whom God expresses his very being (1:1-4). However, instead of pursuing the image of the Son as the true temple (or ο-κμνη as our author would undoubtedly prefer), Hebrews employs the language of liturgy to focus on the Son as great High Priest and sacrificial victim. The one who expresses God ministers redemptively in an οἶκος, a temple, made up of the Christian community, God's household (3:6; 10:21 and cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, where believers are to be built up into a spiritual house, οἶκος πνευματικός.) Heb. 10:21 and its context make this picture rather more explicit. Here the brethren are exhorted to enter with confidence into the sanctuary. Their confidence, they are reminded, is based on two fundamental aspects of the significance of Jesus - the blood sacrifice of his flesh (vv.19, 20) and the fact that he is "great priest over the house (οἶκος) of God (v.21). They are God's house (3:6), at least if they are steadfast, his household and the place where, in his Son, he dwells and ministers his high priestly blessings. 2:11-13 had reminded them of the holy one (Jesus) in the midst of

their worshipping congregation, Further exposition and teaching should have brought them to an awareness that this Jesus, whom they believed to be taking a leading rôle in their liturgical assembly, does so as their unexpected and divine high priest who offered himself for their deliverance from sin and now lives to make intercession for them (7:25), mediating all the benefits of the new covenant (8-10). As God's house, therefore, they must be pure and clean (10:22). Moreover, they are being incorporated into the heavenly worship assembly (12:22-24), entering into a sanctuary not made with hands (9:24; 10:19-21) where their exalted high priest exercises his perfect new covenant ministry (8:1-7). Being on earth, they are yet in heaven, a paradox beloved of our author. The gulf is bridged, he believes, by the drawing near of confident worship, made possible and led by the divine high priest who has taken hold of humanity. This high priest over the house of God (10:21) is the one who is faithful over God's house as a Son (3:6) - a Son worthy of equal honour with the builder of the house, with the builder of all things, with God (3:3, 4). Our author's community does not, however, have to wait until chapter 10 for the link to be made between sonship over the house of God and high priesthood. The introduction to 3:2-6 paves the way for this powerful association. 3:1 (following on from 2:17, 18) has exhorted the "holy brethren" to reflect upon (κατανοήσατε) Jesus as *high priest* and it is in the context of such reflection that they are to receive what is propounded of the Son in the subsequent exposition.

2:22 4:14
 ἔχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν διελθὲν θόρον τοῦ οὐρανοῦ,
 ἡμοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας.

Here the perception of Jesus as great high priest and Son of God come into direct conjunction - and the Hebrews community are undoubtedly intended to make the connection between this conjunction and the author's definitive opening sentence. God has spoken in a Son who made purification of sins (1:2, 3). All that has transpired between this emphatic claim and 4:14 has served to underline its boldness and begun to explore its significance. The community has been clearly appraised of the exalted status of the Son

(chap. 1) and of his very real incarnate humanity (chap. 2). It has been stressed, moreover, that exalted glory and testing suffering go hand in hand, faithful obedience being an essential ingredient in their unexpected integration (2-4). And all has been in the context of the character and activity of God. The paragraph at 4:11-16 brings our author's exhortation to an "interim climax". The community, including himself, are to be eager (Σπουδάζομεν) to enter into God's rest, so as to avoid the pitfall of disobedience (v.11). The God whom they will thereby encounter penetrates discerningly into the deepest level of being and before him they are totally exposed (vv. 12, 13). Yet vv. 14-16 make it clear that this is by no means the terrifying prospect that it sounds. Indeed, believers are urged to approach this God with bold confidence (μετὰ παρρησίας) - for he has expressed the truth of his character in one who is son, one identified successively as Jesus and great high priest. That these three are one is underlined by 4:14. The following verse sums up the ground for confidence. Jesus the Son of God, their great high priest, can identify κατὰ πάντα with the human condition. And Jesus the Son of God, their great high priest, is the definitive expression of God himself (1:3).

Because the high priesthood of Jesus is in this paragraph so directly linked with his sonship (and with the character of God), they are arguably to be understood as 'co-inherent'. Jesus the Son of God is also (at the same time)¹⁰ ἄρχιερέα μέγαν (v.14). What does this imply about the nature of Jesus' priesthood? Surely that like sonship, it expresses the ὑπόστασις of God (cf. 1:3). Indeed, that all that is suggested in 1:1-4 about the significance of the one who is Son¹¹ applies equally to the significance of his high priesthood. So the priesthood of Jesus has a prophetic dimension. It is associated with creation, with the glory and wisdom and sovereignty of God, as well as with the cleansing of sin¹². It is also linked, through the Adam and Servant allusions, with God's best purposes for humanity¹³. It is a view of high priesthood which stretches existing boundaries far beyond their limits.

7.23 verses 5:5-8

These references to Jesus as Son occur within a discussion of high priesthood comparing "every high priest" (5:1-4) with Jesus the high priest (5:5-10). It is a carefully structured discussion, three points about $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\varsigma$ $\alpha\rho\chi\iota\epsilon\rho\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$ being related to Jesus in reverse order, thus giving a pattern of a b c c b a'⁴. The use of $\alpha\rho\chi\iota\epsilon\rho\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$ in vv.1 and 10 forms an effective *inclusio*, though, as a result of the intervening discussion, the word has a rather different sense at the end than at the beginning. Despite the similarities, Jesus is *not* to be categorized with "every high priest".

The three points highlighted have to do with salvation from sin, compassionate weakness and divine vocation. With all of these Jesus is closely associated as Son as well as high priest. Thus the reference to his sonship in v.5 relates to the divine character of his sacerdotal calling and the one in v.8 to both his real humanity (vv.7, 8) and his status as $\alpha\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma \sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho\iota\kappa\iota\varsigma$ $\chi\iota\omega\nu\iota\omicron\upsilon$ (v.9). Jesus' vocation as high priest, it would seem, is inextricably bound up with his being Son of God.

In vv. 5 and 6, our author uses two psalm verses to make this point, one familiar (Ps. 2:7) and one not previously cited, either here or in any other NT document (Ps. 110:4). As P.E. Hughes puts it, "The collocation of these two... affirmations... shows how closely within the perspective of the history of redemption the Sonship and the Priesthood of Christ belong together"⁵. Peterson, quoting Moffatt in the process, tentatively pushes the implication further: "There is clearly a vital connection in our writer's thinking between the titles 'high priest' and 'Son' and it may be that the linking of Ps. 2:7 and Ps. 110:4 here is meant to indicate that 'the position of divine Son carried with it in some sense the role of $\alpha\rho\chi\iota\epsilon\rho\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$ '"⁶. It may be argued that this was indeed the *main* point our author was seeking to communicate at this stage in his exposition. The way he has already used Ps. 2:7 in his opening statement (1:5) has pointed to the more than messianic significance of the Son he identifies with Jesus⁷. This Son is out of the being of God himself and this Son is declared by God to be a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek (v. 6). Both designations (Son and high priest) are

emphatic declarations by God of the essential identity of the one known to the Christian community as Jesus : υἱός μου εἶ σὺ — — σὺ ἔργευσ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα — As Son, Jesus shares the characteristics of his Father, among which is a priestliness which breaks the bounds of existing definitions. This our author will emphasize in chapter 7 when he explores what is implied by κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ.

The 'starting point' for sonship and priesthood is to be thought of as outside time - God expressing himself in eternity (vv.5, 6). Such expression becomes apparent and is fully articulated in human terms in the days of Jesus' flesh (v.7). This is made clear regarding his status as Son by the little phrase καίτερ ὧν υἱός in v.8 (cf. ἐν υἱῷ — ὅς ὧν 1:2, 3). His eternal, already existing sonship has to be worked out in painful human experience. So also, we suggest, his priesthood. The result is that afterwards he can be greeted by God as high priest (v.10). He can have his vocation divinely confirmed, having become what he always was, in the sense of realising his priestly potential to redeem mankind. As Westcott puts it, the *hapax legomenon* προσαγορεύειν "expresses the formal and solemn ascription of the title to Him to whom it belongs"². In this, as in other respects, sonship and priesthood go hand in hand.

7.24 7:3 & 28

The usage of υἱός in these verses relates significantly in both cases to the priesthood of Jesus after the order of Melchizedek.

The reference in v.3 comes at the climax of one of our author's extended sentences (vv.1-3)¹², this one being concerned with the mysterious Melchizedek - or rather, as v.3 makes clear, with his importance for understanding the priestly character of the Son of God. This Melchizedek ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ, μένει ἔργευσ εἰς τὸ διηνεκές. The royal priest who does not fit into the Levitical scheme of priesthood has been made like the Son of God. Such a claim suggests that the Son of God's priesthood is indeed of the order of eternity. It is the eternal truth which, for our author, Melchizedek so tellingly typifies and the characteristics he

shows forth are, to say the least, striking. Melchizedek the priest 'resembles' the priestly Son of God in that he has "neither beginning of days nor end of life" (7:3), in his superiority even to the great patriarch Abraham (7:1, 2, 4-10), in his royalty with its (messianic) qualities of righteousness and peace (7:1, 2), in his lack of Levitical credentials (7:6), in the perpetuity of his priesthood which obviates the need for successors (7:3). Here, in traditional Jewish terms, was a revolutionary view of priesthood - and it points directly to the priesthood of that eternal Son of God who "bears the very stamp of [God's] nature" (1:3), who truly, and not just in scriptural type, has "neither beginning of days nor end of life".

The Son of God, our author makes clear in chapter 7, did not have the 'correct' Levitical genealogy to qualify as a priest (7:13). Yet in him is expressed the perfection of priesthood - the opening up of a permanent way into the presence of God (7:25). In him, then, God has done a new thing, has, as it were, broken his own rules (articulated in the law) - rules which the weakness of sinful men (7:28) rendered ineffective (7:11, 18, 19, 27, 28). God's Son and his perfect high priesthood remain εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (7:24). His eternal priesthood, moreover, is declared by the emphatic and unchangeable oath of God himself (7:20-22, 28). God can bring about change in the dynastic priesthood and therefore in the law - both originating from himself - but he cannot go back on his oath sworn to his Son (7:21), for he is expressing thereby the truth about himself and what in 6:17 is called τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς αὐτοῦ. When the Lord swears, his oath cannot be broken (cf. 3:11, 18, 19; 6:13-18). To this fact the community must commit themselves, letting go of that (God-given) law which, because of fallen human involvement, is weak and imperfect (7:18, 19). Their allegiance is to a Son and high priest whose divinely endowed perfection is εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (7:28). The implications are far-reaching. As Aaron's sons inherit his imperfect priesthood (and significantly none of his sons is addressed in filial terms by God)²⁰, so God's Son inherits God's priesthood. His 'genealogy', though counter to tradition, is impeccable and the character of his priesthood renders it ἀπαράβατον. The former things have passed away.

7.25 6:6 & 10:29

ἀνταρποῦντας ἑαυτοῖς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ	6:6
ὁ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ καταπατήσας	10:29

The context of both these references is a severe warning against rejection of "the truth" (10:26), which is tantamount to re-crucifying and trampling upon the Son of God. The consequences of such behaviour are dire indeed, worse even than the fate of one violating the law of Moses (10:28). The Son of God, our author is implying, is of far greater significance than the revered law of Moses. The law is but a shadow (10:1), the Son is the full brightness of God's glory (1:3). Trampling on him, crucifying him afresh is an act against the direct expression of God himself.

Both of these references to ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ have also to be seen in relation to his priesthood. At 5:10, our author has reached a point where he is ready to move on to a presentation of the meaning of the Son's Melchizedekian high priesthood. He feels, however, that there is a need to further prepare the community for the full import of his message since they have become νωθροὶ in their hearing. Such 'dullness' is clearly linked to the real danger of slipping into apostasy - hence the severity of his strictures. The more they realise the enormity of rejecting the Son of God, the more they are likely to grasp the extent of his significance as high priest.

By the time our author has reached his fearful warning at 10:29, he has delivered a major exposition on Jesus as Son, High Priest, Victim and Inaugurator of the new covenant. This has culminated at 10:19f.f. in a call to enter into the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, the great priest over the house of God (10:19, 21). His blood has ratified the new covenant. Rejection of that covenant amounts to an exceedingly dangerous profanation, for the ratifying blood was that of a "great priest" who was also "the Son of God (10:29).

For our author, then, the sonship and high priesthood of Jesus are inextricably intertwined. Each sheds light on the character and significance of the other. Together they express something of great importance about the nature and activity of God himself. He who has spoken definitively in a Son

has spoken in priestly fashion, giving flesh to his active desire to bring humanity into unhindered communion with himself.

7.3 Priesthood and Kingship

It is clear from Hebrews 1 and 2 that the Son is to be regarded as royal²¹. He is a king who sits at God's right hand in fulfilment of Ps. 110:1 (1:3, 13) and whose throne is eternal (1:8). The characteristics of his kingship are righteousness and gladness (1:8, 9) and the whole tenor of chapter 1 suggests that his sovereignty is universal, an impression reinforced by what is implied of Jesus at 2:8f²². He is certainly messianic king but this messiah is also agent and ruler of creation (1:2, 3; 2:8f), the ἀπαύρασμα of God's glory. His divine, kingly glory, moreover, is not only expressed in heavenly exaltation. It is also to be powerfully discerned in the "suffering of death" (2:9)²³.

That paradox is for our author creatively associated with the high priesthood of Jesus the Son. As we argued in chap. 4, "For the writer of Hebrews, kingship and priesthood are vitally linked, for together they underline that inter-relationship between suffering and glory which he believed to be at the heart of the Christian message"²⁴. Ps. 110 provided him with an effective vehicle for propounding this combination of vocations. It was addressed to the Davidic king (and Jesus the "Lord" was descended from Judah, 7:14), yet v.4 declared him also to be a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. No other NT writer makes this connection, but for our author it expresses admirably his perception of the royal priesthood of Jesus. The link is first suggested at 1:3 where the Son's priestly work and regal majesty are placed in conjunction, the latter by a preliminary allusion to Ps. 110:1. At 1:8f, as we have seen²⁵, the kingship of Melchizedek may well be obliquely indicated in the quotation from Ps. 45 and chapter 1 is rounded off by a direct reference to Ps. 110:1. Royal priesthood - and its character - is further intimated in chapter 2 with its description of Jesus, the one "crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death", as "a merciful and faithful high priest."

Such intimations in the opening chapters of the Epistle are gradually made more explicit as the 'word of exhortation' proceeds. The first direct quotation of Ps. 110:4 comes at 5:6. After further preparatory references at 5:10 and 6:20, our author focuses attention on the figure of Melchizedek in chapter 7, drawing now on Gen. 14. His very name points to the significance of his kingship, for it indicates that he is "king of righteousness". Further, he is "king of Salem" and therefore, by translation, "king of peace" (7:2). Melchizedek's kingship, then, has qualities characteristic of the messianic age - and his kingship is inextricably bound up with his priesthood. So, *par excellence*, with the Son of God, to whom Melchizedek approximates (7:3). "Our Lord", having arisen out of Judah (7:14), was indeed the hoped for Messiah King, bringing the blessings of righteousness and peace but, like the "Lord" addressed in Ps. 110:1, he is also a Melchizedekian priest (7:15-28). And in respect of both he, as eternal Son of God, is true pattern and fulfilment, the perfect expression of the kingship and priesthood of God himself.

Ps. 110:1 is specifically linked with the high priesthood of the Son in the "summary statement" of 8:1: ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα, ὃς ἐκλήθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Θρονου τῆς μεγαλowsυνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. So also at 10:12f. The latter occurs in the context of a passage which makes clear that Christ's kingly high priesthood was exercised in a most surprising way. The "single offering" by which "he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (10:14) was none other than "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ" (10:10). Christ the royal high priest offered himself as a sacrifice, making possible full and final remission of sins and confident access to God. In this he was unique. No king had ever made such a sacrifice, not even the priest king Melchizedek, made like to the Son of God in so many other ways. Here is a boldly new definition of the sovereignty of Jesus the Son. Bearing the very stamp of God's nature (1:1-3), he exercises his regal authority by an act of total self-giving which was both priestly and sacrificial in character (cf. 10:5-22). That act was "once for all" but his capacity to identify with and care for weak humanity is everlasting (cf. 4:15; 7:25). Seated at God's right hand in kingly splendour is a high priest who longs that people should draw near to the throne of grace and who has gone to the extremest of lengths

to make that possible. Moreover, this royal high priest perfectly reveals the attitude and activity of God.

Jesus as king was undoubtedly a familiar notion to our author²⁶. Jesus as high priest who offered himself was a new perception. Perhaps the representative character of both Jewish kingship and Jewish high priesthood helped him to make the connection between the two, for in his understanding Jesus was very much a representative figure, representing to perfection both his human "brethren" and his divine Father²⁷. In any event the connection made was a creative one. It is the kind of high priest that Jesus is which provides the key to the nature of his kingship - a divine majesty infused with redemptive suffering. Such a faith-building paradox our author urgently wished to get across to his community in their time of testing (cf. 5:11ff).

7.4 Priesthood and the new Adam

In our exposition of Hebrews 1 and 2, we suggested that the figure of Adam was of some importance in our author's understanding of the significance of Jesus the Son²⁸. Jesus as the new Adam fulfils God's truest vision for humanity, for he is God's unblemished image (1:3) and all God's angels worship him (1:6). He points the way to mankind's dominion over creation (2:6-10), shares completely the human condition (2:11, 14-17), knows the force of temptation (2:18), defeats the devil with his power of death (2:14, 15), and in all this is totally loyal to God (2:13, 17). Such an interpretation is not unique to Hebrews. It is to be found in one way or another in a number of NT writings²⁹, not least at 1 Cor. 15:23ff, where Paul uses Ps. 110 and Ps. 8 in a 'new Adam' context. What is new is the association of this imagery with the notion of Jesus as high priest. The link is there already at 1:3 with its mention of the purification of sins. It becomes explicit at 2:17, where his identification with his "brethren" is said to be an essential element in the realisation of his high priestly vocation.

7.41 4:11-16

This fusion of interpretative categories continues throughout the Epistle. It becomes evident again at 4:11-16 - and we remember that this is the culmination of a section (3:1-4:10) in which the motifs of creation and redemption have been skilfully woven together³⁰. The "sabbath rest" into which Christians are urged to be eager to enter (4:11) is an experience denied to the Israelites in the wilderness because of their disobedience and lack of trust (3:18, 19; 4:11). This kind of sin was at the heart of Adam's failure, that fallen Adam who tried to hide himself from God but whose nakedness was exposed by the divine voice (Gen. 3:8-12 cf. Heb. 4:11-13). The figure of 'old Adam' is surely implicit at this point in our author's exposition, as he warns against disobedience, drawing attention to the all-penetrating word of God and the unavoidable nakedness of all humanity before the God from whom no-one can hide. It is a fearsome prospect, yet the writer, having challenged his community, continues immediately with words of encouragement. They cannot hide - but they have nothing to fear. They should rather boldly draw near to the throne of grace because there representing them is a high priest who can identify with their weaknesses, one who in every respect has been tested as they are yet who has not fallen into sin (4:15, 16). This representative new Adam and high priest, the source of their confidence and salvation, is none other than Jesus the Son of God, the one who bears the very stamp of God's nature.

7.42 5:7-9

The theme of this 'divine' priest's real humanity is continued in chapter 5. Verses 7 to 9 give a graphic description of what Christ's humanity involved and, as the context (5:1-10) makes clear, it was inextricably bound up with his priesthood. His was not an easy vocation. Though he was God's Son, the influence of Adam's death-dealing sin of disobedience meant that his human experience was subject to intense suffering. As new Adam, he had to learn obedience from the things which he suffered (ἐμαθεν ὑπὸ ὧν ἔπαθεν
5:8)³¹, in so doing fulfilling God's purposes (τελεωθεὶς)
and thus becoming ἄγιος σωτήριος αἰώνιον (5:9).

His 'learning through suffering' was not a matter of educative chastisement³², though Heb. 12:5-11 (quoting Proverbs 3:11-12) warns Christians that it may be so for them. It was rather learning through experience how difficult the exercise of obedience was in the setting of fallen humanity³³. As divinely appointed high priest (5:5), Jesus took into his priesthood "in the days of his flesh" the full force of the human condition. So also, in our author's understanding, the figure of new Adam has been caught up into what he sees as the even more comprehensive figure of the great high priest.

7.43 10:19-22

This summary passage may well present us with another 'Adam allusion', and yet again it is closely tied up with Jesus' priesthood. Adam's sin in effect closed the way to unhindered communion with God, raising a barrier symbolized by the "curtain" separating off the holy of holies³⁴. The obedience of Jesus, his total commitment to God's will (cf. 10:5-10) opens up the way to God (10:20) through his 'new Adam' flesh (10:20, cf. 5:7), the "body" prepared for him by God (10:5) and sacrificially offered (10:10) to inaugurate the 'in depth' relationship of the new covenant (10:12-18). The curtain is thus no longer a barrier but a way through³⁵ because it corresponds with the flesh of Jesus, the fully obedient human being (10:20). Full communion with God is restored through the one who, having been saved out of his sacrificial death (cf. 5:7), ministers as great priest over the house of God (10:21). Here, then, is a suggestive inter-weaving of Adam typology and liturgical symbolism. Free access to God, rendered impossible by Adam's sin and formally excluded by subsequent divinely given liturgical provisions, has been opened up by a perfectly obedient and sinless human being (Jesus the new Adam) who can thereby represent mankind in the presence of God as the perfect high priest. Further, those who acknowledge Jesus are to enter into the sanctuary³⁶ after him, for they have been purified outside and in by his representative obedience, by his representative death as priestly victim (10:19, 22).

7.5 Priesthood and the Servant of God

At a number of points in Heb. 1 and 2, we discussed the pattern and vocation of the Isaianic servant applied by our author to Jesus the Son and linked with his vocation as "merciful and faithful high priest"³⁷. When we explore possible allusions to this representative and redemptive figure elsewhere in the Epistle, we find, interestingly, that they, too, like the allusions to Jesus as Son, King and new Adam, are clearly associated with his priesthood.

7.5.1 5:5-10

As we have seen, a number of scholars find in this passage, and especially in vv.7-9, the influence of the Servant figure. Buchanan, for example, points to the stress in these verses on Jesus' suffering humanity and its issue in "eternal salvation", making connections with the vocation of the suffering Servant (Is. 53:3, 6, 10, 12) and the Lord's saving of (his servant) Israel with *σωτηρίαν αἰώνιον* (Is. 45:17)³⁸. There is no doubt that Jesus is presented in this passage as an afflicted human being and through this as the source of eternal salvation. We may question, however, whether the influence of the suffering Servant has been quite so dominant as Buchanan implies. There is, for example, a striking feature of the experience of Jesus which seems to sit uneasily with what is said of the Servant in Is. 53. Jesus met his call to die "with strong crying and tears" (5:7). The Servant did not open his mouth, being led as a dumb sheep to the slaughter (Is. 53:7). Further, there are few *specific* pointers in this passage to a positive identification between Jesus and the Servant. Major attention seems to be focused on Jesus as Son, royal high priest and, perhaps, new Adam.

Nonetheless, Peterson may be right³⁹ to detect an underlying allusion to Is. 50:4-9, where the Lord's Servant is both learner and teacher in a context of suffering imposed by others. So Jesus "learned obedience through what he suffered and... became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him" (5:8, 9). It is possible, too, to discern in the whole section from 5:5-10 the

essential pattern of the suffering servant's experience, i.e. exaltation (vv.5, 6) - suffering (vv. 7, 8) - exaltation (vv. 9-10). It may be, then, that the figure of the Isaianic Servant as a way of understanding the person and redemptive ministry of Jesus was so deeply ingrained in our author's thinking that it had a pervasive, perhaps subconscious influence on his exposition at this point. If this is so, then, like the figure of Adam, it has been creatively absorbed into the picture of Jesus the Son as high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

7.52 7:25 & 27

Snell links 7:25 with the intercession of the Servant as recorded at Is. 53:12. The drawback with this association is that the LXX rendering of Is. 53:12 makes no mention of interceding for the transgressors - and it is with the Greek rather than the Hebrew of the Jewish Scriptures that our author is apparently most familiar⁴⁰. Neither is it the case that in Jewish thinking, intercession on behalf of God's sinful people was limited to the suffering Servant. As we have seen in our survey of possible sources for Hebrews' priestly christology, there are a number of other powerful intercessors⁴¹ in the tradition. The link between 7:25 and the interceding Servant must therefore be judged somewhat tenuous.

The case for linking 7:27 with the Servant figure is based on the common factor of voluntary self-offering for the sins of the people expressed through the word ἱνα φέρω (cf. Is.. 53:12)⁴². This association of the Servant with Jesus in their common vocation as willing sacrificial victims is surely a strong one, and is reinforced by the clear allusion to Is. 53:12 at Heb. 9:28. Such a perception may well have been deeply influential in pointing our author towards the notion of Jesus as priest as well as victim (and that notion is certainly the context of Heb. 7:27) but, as we have argued earlier⁴³, it is in itself not sufficient to fully explain the comprehensive sacerdotal image we find in Hebrews. Like other familiar christological understandings, it feeds into and 'flavours' the mixture, but it by no means defines the finished product.

7.53 9:14 & 28

F.F. Bruce considers that the enigmatic phrase διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου in 9:14 is to be understood by reference to Is. 42:1, where God says of Jacob his servant, ἔδωκα τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπ' αὐτόν⁴⁴. Our author's use of αἰώνιος certainly suggests that the "Spirit" to which he is referring should be related directly to God⁴⁵. It would not be surprising, either (particularly in view of his evidently extensive knowledge of Christian 'testimonia') if he were aware of the Is. 42 Servant passage in Christian interpretation of Jesus. That use is unmistakeable at Matt. 12:18-21. It may well underlie other NT passages, notably the synoptic accounts of Jesus' baptism⁴⁶. If it is in our author's mind at Heb. 9:14, he has clearly linked it up with the 'self-sacrificing' Servant of Is. 53 (διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν⁴⁷). That Servant is undoubtedly alluded to a few verses later at 9:28, increasing the likelihood of an association at 9:14. A. Richardson, indeed, sees the whole section from 9:11-18 as a re-statement of the Servant theme (redemptive self-offering) in terms of Hebrews' own understanding of atonement and ascension⁴⁸. There is arguably more to it than that, for our author is clearly also exploring the significance of the day of atonement and the establishment of the Mosaic covenant. Nonetheless, it would seem from Is. 42:6 and 49:6 that the Servant is in some way regarded as the mediator of a covenant of universal significance⁴⁹, so here, too, there may be linkage of ideas with Jesus as mediator of a new covenant (9:15). Anointed with God's spirit (9:14), offering himself (9:14), bearing the sins of many (9:28), and thereby mediating a new covenant (9:15), Jesus the high priest (9:11) fulfils the vocation of the Servant. Yet his vocation as heavenly high priest cannot be restricted to this interpretative category, for, in our author's conviction, a greater than the Servant is here - one who must be seen against a very broad background and whose priesthood embraces and goes far beyond a whole range of existing perceptions, both Jewish and Christian.

7.6 Priesthood and the new covenant

The opening words of Heb. 2 strongly suggest that our author is thinking of the Christian dispensation in terms of a new covenant (cf. vv. 1-4)⁵⁰. It

is a theme he develops in some depth in the main body of his Epistle and very particularly in chapters 8-10. For him, the mediator of this new covenant is, of course, Jesus - Jesus who is greater than those who mediated the old covenant (the angels and Moses) and who is also great high priest. Indeed, the origin and character of his priesthood (divinely affirmed and eternal) are crucial to his reliability as "surety of a better covenant" (7:21, 22). This is a fascinating contention, for not even a *high* priest was involved in the inauguration of the old covenant (cf. Ex. 24:3-8). Yet it is clear from our author's exposition that bringing into being a new covenant was part of Jesus' *sacerdotal* vocation. His high priesthood was not simply an additional feature. It was integral to his making possible a new covenant relationship with God (so 7:21, 22; 8:1-6; 9:11-15).

That relationship involved deep forgiveness of sins and 'heart-knowledge' of God (8:8-12; 19:16, 17, quoting Jer. 31:31ff). Such was the desire of God for his people. He had expressed this desire in the sacrificial system of the old covenant, most notably in relation to the Day of Atonement, making provision for the High Priest to represent his people in seeking atonement for sin. Yet persistent human failure and weakness had rendered this provision imperfect and ineffective (10:1-4). It was this which no doubt encouraged our author to present Jesus the high priest as mediator of a new covenant. For this high priest he saw as the full expression of God's desire for intimate communion with humanity (1:1-4), who in offering himself made both a covenant sacrifice and final atonement for sin (cf. e.g. 7:15-28).

We see, therefore, that our author's perception of Jesus as high priest has taken into itself and used creatively yet another familiar⁵⁰ way of interpreting Christ's ministry. Again, however, this interpretation, the establishment of a new covenant, significant though it is, is not sufficient to exhaust the implications of perceiving Jesus the Son of God as great and eternal high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

7.7 Conclusion

We have seen how each of the five major christological interpretations mentioned above and identifiable in Heb., 1 and 2 is carefully related to the author's exposition of the high priesthood of Jesus in the remainder of his Epistle. In each case, the relationship made is a close and creative one, helping the community (or so the author hopes) to recognize the "fittingness" of a sacerdotal perception of Jesus and to explore its implications. Like the pastor and preacher that he is, the writer uses familiar ways of understanding, familiar expressions of worship and belief to lead his addressees into a new and broader vision, a vision that has captivated *him* and which he sees as directly applicable to the community's dangerous spiritual condition.

That vision is big enough to take in and transform the familiar, big enough to draw existing perceptions together and express them afresh in integrated fashion. So the basic elements of familiar perceptions of Jesus are to be discerned, suggestively blended together, in his high priesthood. From the understanding of Jesus as mediator of the new covenant, the author draws out the assurance of a new relationship with God, based on full forgiveness of sin and intimacy of knowing; from the notion of Jesus as the Servant, the significance of suffering, bound up with voluntary and redemptive self-offering; from Jesus as new Adam, the re-creative importance of perfect obedience and resistance to sin and temptation; from Jesus as King, the reality of his divine majesty and dominion; from Jesus as Son of God, the conviction that he reveals the divine character, purpose and will. All these elements have their part to play in our author's picture of Jesus as great high priest, and all have been associated with existing interpretations of Jesus which are fundamentally representative in character, either of humanity or God or both. Our author, perceiving this, has woven the strands together so that they 'co-inhere' in a way that throws up unexpected perspectives. Thus, for example, exalted kingship comes to be defined in terms of the glory of redemptive suffering (2:9 cf. 5:5-10; 7:26-8:1). The King expresses his majesty as the Servant. The mediator of the new covenant speaks for God and articulates the perfect response of humanity (10:5-17).

Such perspectives are united by and in our author's vision of the high priesthood of Jesus, though they do not contain it. It is a comprehensive vision which he urgently wishes to share. Yet he is aware that, despite its many familiar ingredients, it is a vision which opens up new and potentially difficult ground (cf. 5:11-14). Hence his care and concern to prepare the way and point the direction in his opening section (chapters 1 and 2).

7.8 Jesus as great high priest after the order of Melchizedek

As we have seen⁵¹, it may well be that by his use in chap. 1 of Ps. 110:1 and Ps. 45:7 (with its implication that the Son is king of righteousness) our author is preparing his community for the unfamiliar notion of Christ not only as high priest but as royal high priest after the order of Melchizedek. In claiming the latter, he is unquestionably being innovative. What, then, led him in this direction and what does it contribute to his comprehensive picture of Jesus as high priest?

Perceiving Jesus in priestly terms must have presented our author with at least one initial problem. Jesus, the Davidic Messiah, was of the tribe of Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests (7:14). Yet seeing Christ as priest drew out and drew together so much of the writer's understanding of the person and work of Jesus. Reflecting on the familiar affirmation of Christ's kingship in Ps. 110:1 very likely provided him with the way through his dilemma. As he rehearsed to himself the rest of the psalm, v.4 perhaps struck him in a new and creative way. Here indeed was a pointer to the validity of proclaiming Jesus as priest. Here too was an image which encouraged him to pursue that bold interpretation of the significance of Christ's priesthood, to which worship and experience was leading him. Reference to Gen. 14 confirmed the possibilities. Melchizedek was clearly the mysterious scriptural⁵² type of a high priest who was not only messianic king but also eternal Son of God.

Such may have been our author's route to Christ's priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. The use of this idea (which in our view encouraged

rather than caused the writer's reflections) has far-reaching implications, both for christology and for the fundamental question of the nature of God, Melchizedek, like Jesus, did not have, in traditional terms, the correct genealogical background to be a priest (7:6). Yet, in blessing and receiving tithes from Abraham, he demonstrated his superiority to the patriarch in whose loins 'Levi' (symbolizing the traditional priesthood) could be said to be (7:4-10). So much the more is Jesus' priesthood, the antitype of Melchizedek's, greater and more effective than priesthood according to that law which made nothing perfect (7:15-25). This supreme expression of priesthood thus breaks radically with tradition (cf. 7:16a), a tradition, moreover, which is God-given, for it emanates from the first covenant, disobedience to which brought divine punishment (2:2 cf. 9:1, 7:12). Yet such tradition, because of human weakness and failure, could only be a shadow of the full truth (cf. 10:1). It could never bring about God's deepest purpose, the perfect redemption and re-creation of humanity. Something more was needed, and it is perhaps characteristic of the paradoxical God of Hebrews that he should act in a surprising manner, to fulfil his purpose, acting not in accordance with the strict terms of his own law but in a way that invited reference to a mysterious and tangential figure in the Jewish Scriptures.

Arguing from the silence of those scriptures³³, our author asserts that Melchizedek, as well as being without genealogy, has μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ὧης τέλος (7:3). In this, as in the perpetuity of his priesthood, he is like the Son of God (7:3)³⁴, who is eternal priest κατὰ δύναμιν ὧης ἀκαταλύτου (7:16b). This Son of God who remains for ever (7:24) expresses the perfection of priesthood (cf. 7:11ff) and his priesthood is the intransmissible (ἀπαράβατον 7:24). The clear implication of this state of affairs is that there is no further need for a dynastic sacerdotal order, passed on from generation to generation. That has served its purpose and its inadequacies are manifest (cf. e.g. 7:11, 18, 19, 27, 28). On the other hand, Jesus, the divinely appointed priest after the order of Melchizedek (5:6, 10; 7:17, 21), is also God's Son (5:5, 6), the perfect expression of God's being and will (1:1-3). He thus receives his priesthood directly from his Father, a priesthood which fully expresses his Father's own sacerdotal character and

ministry. It therefore scatters all shadows, is complete in itself and eternal in efficacy. It needs no successors.

Vickham makes the interesting comment that Melchizedek was "not only outside the Levitical Law but outside of the sacred race; representative not of a local but a world-wide religion"⁵⁵. Our author does not overtly exploit Melchizedek's non-Jewish identity but his insistence that this "priest of the most high God" was ἀγεγεννημένος (7:3) certainly points to an awareness that the confines of Judaism were being broken in a manner even more radical than the laying aside of the ritual Law. For the Jew, genealogy was of the utmost significance. We have already argued⁵⁶ that, for our author, the ministry of Jesus was ὑπὲρ πάντων (2:9), not just for a privileged race. The Melchizedekian character of Christ's priesthood perhaps served to reinforce this contention for a community tempted to lapse back into Judaism. It remains true, however, that the main burden of the Melchizedek comparison has to do with the divine and eternal character of the priesthood of Jesus - a Jesus who, though in human terms of non-Levitical descent, was nonetheless "in the days of his flesh" most certainly a Jew (7:14). Yet, as the Melchizedek typology strongly suggests, the priestly Son of God was superior in status even to Abraham, the father of the chosen race and indeed of many nations⁵⁷. The blessing brought by this priest emanates from one through whom God created the ages and who sustains all things by the word of his power, one who bears the very stamp of God's nature (1:2, 3).

The figure of Melchizedek thus contributes significantly to our author's presentation of Jesus the Son as High Priest. It evokes mystery and occasions surprise. So does the priesthood of Jesus, for it is not confined or defined by tradition (even tradition of God's own making) and it breaks the boundaries of 'sacred' dynasty and race. Moreover, as prefigured by Melchizedek, it is eternal in character and efficacy, needing no dynastic succession. It is superior in status to the Levitical priesthood and involves the exercise of a kingship characterised by righteousness and peace. This indeed is a new way of looking at the office of a (high) priest. Even the Hasmonean priest kings had been concerned with matters of heredity and succession and attempts were made to justify and 'regularize' their deficiencies with regard to genealogical

qualifications⁵⁰. Yet in Jesus, claims our author, we have a high priest whose 'pedigree', though unorthodox, links him directly with God (cf. 5:5-6) and whose sovereignty involves the ability to "save for all time ($\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \tau\acute{o}\ \pi\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$) those who draw near to God through him" (7:25 and cf. 8:1-6). This high priest exercises his ministry "in the sanctuary and the true tabernacle which is set up not by man but by the Lord" (8:2). His is not a limited and finite earthly priesthood (8:4-6), though it is infused with incarnate human experience (4:14-16). He "always lives" (7:25) to bring about confident communion with God - and he can do this with complete effectiveness because he is faithful to who he is, the Son of God, 'without beginning of days or end of life' (7:3), who gives perfect and eternal expression to the nature and purpose of God himself (cf. e.g. 1:1-3).

Though Melchizedek can point to this, he cannot himself fulfil it. Great though he is, he is not the Son of God (7:3) and it is not claimed for him that he can offer eternal salvation. Had this been the case there would have been no need for another priest to arise according to his likeness (cf. 7:15). Neither can Melchizedek contain and prefigure all that needs to be said about the high priesthood of the Son of God⁵¹. He did not offer himself to release all the blessings of the new covenant and to open the way to glory. He did not learn obedience through what he suffered. He did not in dying defeat the power of the devil. Though his priesthood is permanent, it is not said to be exercised in the heavenly sanctuary. He is not described as eternal intercessor, nor is it suggested that he is agent and sustainer of creation. Not even Melchizedek can take in our author's full vision of Jesus the great high priest.

7.9 Our author's vision of Jesus as great high priest

Moffatt claims that, for our author, "the new revelation in Jesus simply changes the old sacrificial order with its priesthood for another"⁵². Such a "simple" analysis does scant justice to the pioneering theology of Hebrews. The "order of priesthood" expounded by our author in relation to Christ is far more than a straightforward replacement of what existed. J.L. Houlden is

nearer the mark when he argues that, according to Hebrews, "Jesus does not simply succeed the old priesthood but rather transcends it"⁶¹. The way in which our author perceived Jesus as high priest drew together many strands of understanding, both old and new, to produce a fresh and challenging picture. The 'former things' were looked at in the (defining) light of this comprehensive vision. With such an insight, our author was breaking new ground.

At the heart of his vision was the conviction that God had definitively expressed himself creatively and redemptively in Jesus. The one whom he had come to know and worship⁶² as Jesus, the one who suffered and died and was exalted to God's right hand, the one through whom he experienced forgiveness of sins, was none other than the eternal Son of God, the very $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ of God's being. In this Jesus, therefore, God and man were brought together in a way that fulfilled the essential purposes and function of priesthood, the achievement of the "consummation of mankind in an eternal relationship with God"⁶³. To see Jesus as high priest thus brought into creative harmony the two main elements in our author's religious experience - its theocentricity and its focus on Jesus. Both elements are clearly reflected in the Epistle. Both find unitive expression through the image of priesthood. For in fulfilling his deepest purpose for mankind in Jesus, God has given flesh to the priesthood of his own being. The implications of that we shall explore a little later.

When we outline the basic ingredients of the priesthood of Jesus according to our author, we are reminded again how many of them are carefully prepared for in the first two chapters of the Epistle. In summary, Jesus' priesthood has to do with mediating divine forgiveness, mercy and grace (4:14-16; 5:9; 10:12-18 cf. 1:3; 2:3, 4, 9, 17), with opening up complete freedom of access to God (4:14-16; 7:17-19, 25; 10:19-22 cf. 2:9, 10), with enabling a 'heart-to-heart' new covenant relationship between God and humanity (7:22; 8:6; 9:15; 10:11-18; 12:24 cf. 2:2-4, 10). It is characterised by self-sacrifice and suffering (5:8; 7:27; 9:14, 26; 10:10 cf. 2:9, 10, 15, 18), by obedience, faithfulness and total commitment (3:1, 2, 6; 5:8; 10:5-14 cf. 2:13, 17), by a complete identification with the human condition which signals the will and capacity to help those in need (4:15; 5:7-9; 10:19-22 cf. 2:11-18). Already, such features have burst the boundaries of the traditional Jewish priesthood.

Not only have they "perfected" the intention of that priesthood - to facilitate a safe human approach to God - they have also gone far beyond its cautious provisions. As a result of the exercise of Christ's priesthood, God can now be approached with *παρρησία*, as well as reverence and awe, and approached by all who follow this priest. The terror of God's presence induced by human failure and sin no longer has any power for those who look to Jesus (cf. e.g. 12:18-24). Further, the perfection of priestly ministry turns out to have a deeply pastoral content, something not primarily associated in Judaism with the sacerdotal task⁶⁴. It was the function of a Jewish priest to offer sacrifice (cf. e.g. Lev. 16:15ff.; Ezek. 45:18-20) and to give guidance and instruction in the Law (cf. e.g. Jer. 18:18; Mal. 2:6-8). The care of 'shepherding' resided with the rulers rather than with the priests and was a responsibility delegated by God the supreme Shepherd (cf. e.g. Ezek. 34)⁶⁵. It seems, though, that for our author his experience of Jesus the priest-king, the "great Shepherd of the sheep" (Heb. 13:20), had caused him to look at even traditional priesthood in a pastoral light (cf. Heb. 5:2). Nonetheless, it remains true that the kind of identificatory ministry offered, according to our Epistle, by Jesus would not have been available from priests of the old covenant. They were human, certainly, but it was not within their power to afford the sort of help ministered by one who, though knowing the full force of human weakness, yet expresses eternally and effectively the pastoral concern at the heart of God (cf. e.g. Is. 49:14-16; 66:13; Ezek. 34:11-16). Neither could they achieve *once for all* atonement and profound heart-cleansing. They sacrificed bulls and goats but not themselves. They were impotent to bring into being a new covenant.

The establishment of that covenant, as prophesied in Jer. 31:31ff and quoted at Heb. 8:8-12 and 10:16, 17, was the direct responsibility of God, a fact reflected in the number of first person singulars to be found in the prophecy (9 in all). It is God who will make a new covenant, who will put his laws into his people's minds and write them on their hearts, God who will be merciful toward their iniquities and remember their sins no more. How fitting, then, that the priestly mediator of this new covenant should be himself the direct expression of God. Such could not be said of any other priest or high priest.

Neither could any other priest give the sort of guidance and instruction associated with Jesus. For in mediating the new covenant, he was instrumental in writing God's laws in people's hearts (Heb. 8:10) and bringing them to that intimate knowing of God (8:11) which was closely related to the profound purifying of conscience brought about by his blood (9:14, 15). Deep inner cleansing prepared the way for a truer knowledge of God. That knowledge could only be activated by looking into Jesus (cf. 12:2), by being attentive to the high priest who could indeed reveal in his own person what God was like (1:1-3). He did not simply give instruction in the Law; he disclosed the God who lay behind the Law. The Law could make nothing perfect (7:19), neither could $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$ be achieved through the Levitical priesthood (7:11) but Jesus the high priestly Son of God "has perfected for all time those being sanctified" (10:14), thus effecting the new covenant of forgiveness and interior knowledge of God and his ways. It is surely significant that at 8:8 the most natural subject of $\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\iota$, which introduces the Jeremiah quotation, is the high priest who has been the major subject of 8:1-7, the one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven (8:1 cf. 1:3, 13)⁶⁶. It is this Jesus, the self-expression of God, the one who is $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ (8:8 cf. 1:10) who declares that he will establish a new covenant with all its consequences (cf. 10:9, and its new covenant context: "Lo, I come to do thy will").

Interestingly, at 10:15 the prophecy is put into the mouth of the Holy Spirit, a fact which perhaps sheds light on the much discussed phrase $\delta\iota\alpha\ \pi\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \alpha\iota\omega\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon\ \epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu\ \pi\rho\omicron\sigma\eta\nu\epsilon\gamma\kappa\epsilon\nu$ in 9:14. There is in our author's mind a close relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who is surely the $\pi\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ referred to in 9:14⁶⁷ and thought of, as most of the other references clearly suggest, in personal terms. Each time the Spirit is mentioned, there is a significant connection with Jesus. At 2:4, the Holy Spirit's gifts bear witness to the truth of that great salvation, that new covenant "spoken through the Lord". At 3:7, the Holy Spirit, in prophetically proclaiming Ps. 95:7-11, urges on God's household faithful attentiveness to the faithful Son (cf. 3:1-6). The reference at 6:4 is part of a severe warning that committing apostasy after having become "partakers of Holy Spirit" ($\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{o}\chi\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ — — — $\pi\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \delta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon$) is tantamount to (re-)crucifying the Son of God.

We are reminded that at 3:14, steadfast believers are described as *μειτοχοι -- τοῦ Χριστοῦ*. What they share in is that divine life of redemptive creativity and rest in which Jesus and the Spirit are fully involved - the Spirit chiefly by witness and confirmation (2:4; 3:7; 9:8; 10:15), Jesus by giving it perfect human expression (1:2; 2:5-18; 10:5-14). What is said about the Spirit at 9:14 and 10:29, however, points to a further dimension. The description of (the) Spirit as "eternal" (9:14) implies its essentially divine character, whilst the phrase *τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος* in 10:29 and in context suggests that the Spirit is integrally linked with God's gracious activity, in particular as demonstrated in Jesus. To insult this Spirit of grace⁶⁸ by spurning the Son of God (the one who by the grace of God tasted death for everyone, 2:9) is to invite the vengeance of the living God (10:29-31). These three are to be thought of as, to say the least, in very close conjunction. Thus both Jesus and the Spirit can be perceived as uttering a prophecy coming from the mouth of God (8:8; 10:15) because both give expression to God's will, purpose and character. Indeed, it is through God's Spirit that Jesus the high priest establishes the prophesied covenant and leads people into a heart-knowledge of God and his ways (9:14, 15). There is, of course, no "doctrine of the Trinity" expounded in Hebrews, but our author is undoubtedly moving towards the notion of the threefold plurality in God, pushed perhaps by worship and experience rather than abstract doctrinal thought. It may be true, as Wainwright contends, that our author "does not recognise a threefold *problem*"⁶⁹ [my italics], but he certainly experienced a threefold reality - and that reality was focussed for him in Jesus. Jesus the great high priest, the mediator of the new covenant is radiance of God's glory and carries out his sacrificial ministry of grace through God's eternal Spirit. The 'problem' of trying to *explain* this theologically was left for others to tackle.

The same might be said of Paul when in Rom. 8 he talks of both Jesus and the Spirit interceding (*ἐντυγχάνει*) for God's people (Rom. 8:26, 27, 34)⁷⁰. The writer of Hebrews makes no mention of the Spirit's work of intercession but at 7:25 he does assert that Jesus the high priest "is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them" (*πάντοτε ὥς εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ*

ἀντιπαρὶ τοῦ πατρὸς). Here again, however we interpret ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ, our author is going beyond traditional Jewish notions of high priestly vocation. Many commentators explain his understanding in terms of advocacy (cf. 1 Jn. 2:1, 2)⁷¹, with Jesus either pleading the cause of sinful humanity or articulating requests for help. So, in Montefiore's words, Jesus' intercession is the confident plea of an advocate⁷². The Levitical high priest was not particularly regarded as an intercessor in this 'verbal' sense. Others (like Michael, Abraham and Moses) have a much higher intercessory profile⁷³. We must question, however, whether at this point our author was really thinking of intercession as pleading a case. The one seated at God's right hand had "once for all" dealt with the sinfulness of the human condition. If God ever had needed any persuasion to forgive, he needed such persuasion no more. The whole point of the new covenant was the free offering of forgiveness and the enjoyment of free access to God (10:10-22). By his covenant sacrifice, Jesus "has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (10:14). What need then for special pleading?

Further, the notion of pleading suggests a prior unwillingness on the part of God to release his forgiving grace. Such a divine attitude, however, does not sit easily with the major thrust of our author's theology. His opening sentence (1:1-4) sets the tone and points the way. It is God who has ever taken the initiative in reaching out to his people; God, who in the one who is Son makes purification of sins. He does not need convincing that his people need his mercy. That mercy has always been operative and he exercises it to perfection in his Son. The relationship between God and his Son is one of utter unity: unity of person, will and authority (1:1-3 cf. 10:7, 9). The Son's prayer is thus God's own prayer.

We perhaps draw nearer to our author's understanding of intercession when we shift our focus to the giving of timely help (cf. 4:16). As we have seen⁷⁴, the administration of such help is integral to the relationship of God with his people. The Son's human experience, testing and suffering, as it were, reinforces this divine ministry. for it makes possible a very direct identification with human need. The exalted Son brings into God's presence and God's experience the fulness of his human pilgrimage with all its consequences. The

one who is radiance of God's glory and through whom humanity was created now knows what it is to live in a fallen world, and in heaven that knowledge is translated into his Father's awareness and active concern. Such is the weight of $\epsilon\nu\tau\upsilon\chi\alpha\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu$ in 7:25. As A.M. Ramsey puts it, "The Greek verb does not properly mean to speak or plead or to make petitions or entreaties, it means to meet or encounter someone, in relation to others. What is called the intercession of Jesus means his ceaseless presence with the Father"⁷⁵. So Jesus has become intercessor in a way that indeed expresses the perfection of priesthood. In his person, experience and ministry he unites God and humanity, and as believers draw near, through him, to the throne of grace they are drawn into this saving and eternal unity. They are thus "made perfect", enabled to be as God wants them to be (2:10; 10:14). They are "sanctified", being able to partake of God's holiness (2:11; 10:14; 12:10). And they receive divine help in time of testing need (2:18; 4:16). No Levitical priest could 'produce such results', though the High Priest, in wearing before God in the holy of holies two stones engraved with the names of the tribes of Israel, did remotely point to its possibility (cf. Ex. 28:9-12). Yet Jesus the perfect high priest opens the way for *all* to enter into the very presence of God and enjoy the transforming benefits flowing from his fusion of perfect humanity and divinity. He is therefore not *just* a representative. He makes it possible for all who follow him to enter into direct and intimate relationship with God, to share his experience - though, as our author is at pains to point out, that means coming to glory through suffering (cf. 12:1-24).

Peterson sees great significance in the fact that this priestly intercessor is *seated*⁷⁶. Being seated in the presence of God is a royal prerogative and Peterson thus turns to an example of kingly prayer to shed light on the intercession of the priest-king in Hebrews. At 2 Sam. 7:18-29, David is described as coming in and sitting before the Lord, praying that the promised covenant with his house may indeed continue for ever. So in Heb. 7:25 Christ is "seated in royal state and claiming the fulfilment of the [new] covenant promises for his seed"⁷⁷. Yet Jesus, of course, is seated not *before* the Lord but at his right hand, a position more to do with divine acknowledgement and promise of assistance than with asking for favour. "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a stool for your feet" (Ps. 110:1 cf. Heb. 1:3,

13; 8:1; 10:12, 13; 12:2). For this priest king has *himself* inaugurated the new covenant. It has been brought into being by one of whom the divine statement in 2 Sam. 7:14 is eternally true: "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son" (cf. Heb. 1:5)⁷⁸. God has acted in one who is son and does not need petitioning to minister the consequences of his act to his Son's "house" (in Hebrews this is not a successive ruling dynasty but what is described in Gal. 6:10 as the "household of faith"). The blessings of the new covenant are freely and readily available to all who approach God through Jesus. Again we are led to the conclusion that Christ's "intercession" consists of who he is and what he has done, rather than any activity of 'claiming' things from God.

It is who he is and what he has done that makes Jesus a high priest like no other. He fulfils the deepest aspirations of the Levitical priesthood yet, by its own terms, he is profoundly 'unorthodox' and decisively bursts its boundaries. He cannot even be defined by the Melchizedekian priesthood, for his significance and ministry go far beyond what is said of Melchizedek. Our author's vision of Jesus the great high priest can in fact only be truly perceived in the context of God.

7.10 The theological implications of our author's vision

Our author's message about the priesthood of Christ is characteristically bold and radical. Christ did not inherit his priesthood as a son of Aaron, still less as a descendent of Melchizedek. He is a high priest because he is Son of God. His priestly character and qualifications derive directly from God himself (cf., e.g. 5:5, 6). His "genealogy" is thus impeccable (cf. chap. 1) and his priesthood the expression of God's own priestliness. It was as ἀπαύλωμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ that God's Son "made purification of sins" (1:3). As Williamson puts it, "The burden of [Hebrews'] message... is that through what Jesus was and is man may possess an authentic insight into what God is like"⁷⁹. It is the nature and activity of God, as focussed in Jesus, to which our author is drawing attention from beginning to end. It is God who has spoken definitively in one who is Son.

What, then, does our author wish us to learn about God and his priesthood through its expression in Jesus? When we look at the various facets of Christ's priesthood as belonging to God, a striking picture emerges. This God, as ever, takes the initiative - and he does so in a way which both fulfils and surprises. In Jesus the high priest, he shows forth *par excellence* those qualities which had always characterised his relationship with his people: pastoral care and effective help, the mediation of forgiveness, mercy and grace, utter faithfulness and commitment, the exercise of kingly sovereignty in redemption and the call to obedience. All these find their most complete expression through God's practice of his royal priestly ministry in Jesus. Yet there is much more to be said. When God speaks as high priest in Jesus, he utters a word which, though familiar in many respects, is at the same time difficult and uncomfortable to hear, particularly for those of a Jewish background. It exceeds and explodes expectations of how he will act. Here is the God who reaches out to the whole of humanity, not just a chosen race⁹⁰, making possible for all that intimacy of relationship with himself which had always been his intention and which was foreshadowed in the prophecy of the new covenant. He had destined humanity for "glory", that his human creation might share fully in his own life and sovereignty (cf. 2:6-10) and know him 'from the inside' (cf. 8-10). To bring this about, he enters in Jesus into the 'inside' of the human condition. He identifies with humanity in the context of its fallenness, laying himself open to testing and suffering, becoming 'victim' and being given over to death in order that his deepest purposes might be fulfilled and a new creation brought into being through his travail (cf. chap. 2). Such a divine high priestly ministry was unexpected, not to say shocking. That God suffered in some way with his people was already a significant thread in Jewish understanding⁹¹. That he should make full and final atonement and inaugurate the new covenant by offering himself as sacrificial victim was not an activity immediately thought of as appropriate to God. God's holiness and mankind's imperfection were incompatible, so much so that extreme caution was needed in any approach to the Deity. Yet the truth and importance of incarnation is something of which our author is passionately convinced and which he seeks urgently to communicate.

Part of that importance is that God needs no intermediary to draw mankind freely and confidently into his presence. He does this himself by incorporating humanity into his own being through and in the flesh-taking, death and exaltation of his Son. It is thus short-sighted of Peterson to claim that "To put the emphasis on the union of the divine and human in the person of the mediator diverts attention from the centrality of atonement"². For our author, atonement cannot be understood, still less experienced, unless that union is emphatically acknowledged. When God gives full expression to his priesthood he does so in a way that perfectly brings together divinity and humanity, thus fulfilling the ideal of priesthood, breaking down all barriers and dealing for ever with the problem of sin. The at-one-ment of the incarnation is the essential condition for the eternal efficacy of Christ's atoning sacrifice. For our author, as L.S. Thornton puts it, "The whole action comprised within the human life-story of the incarnate Son is an action taking place within the life of God"³. Or, as he says even more succinctly, "the priesthood of Christ is the priesthood of God incarnate"⁴.

It is God, then, who in Jesus the high priest makes atonement⁵. There is no hint in Hebrews that this involved any conflict or 'transaction' within God himself pace Delitzsch⁶ and Hughes⁷. It is quite clear that our author felt there to be a complete unity of will and activity between Father and Son. The God who spoke with such redemptive creativity in his Son both took the initiative and remained fully involved throughout. It was he, after all, who led many sons to glory (2:10). His awesome holiness (also very real to our author, cf. 12:28, 29) does not cause him to withdraw but rather impels him to take direct action to make possible in humanity that holiness which enables men and women to "see the Lord" (cf. 12:14).

The action he takes is to express his priestly care and activity in Jesus - and the way in which he does it points up his mystery and the 'unpredictable' character of his creativity. As we have seen, he breaks radically with the tradition he himself originated by not identifying himself with the Aaronic line. His priesthood is prefigured by someone who is not even a Jew, let alone someone who has the right genealogical qualifications, someone who is on the edge of the OT story. (We are reminded, perhaps, of God's consistent

tendency in the OT to make surprising choices²².) This God cannot be confined or defined by tradition or expectation. He breaks down barriers and does new things. He acts in mysterious and shocking ways which can only be apprehended through paradox. The great and holy "living God" (10:31), the "consuming fire" (12:29), the one to whom vengeance (10:30) and judgement (12:23) belong, makes himself totally vulnerable in his Son, makes himself 'victim' (9:11-14), identifies with weakness (2:17; 4:15), goes through death (2:14) and welcomes all into his presence with mercy, forgiveness and grace (2:10; 4:16; 10:17, 18). For our author, the unified reality behind the paradox can be experienced and entered into through worship - that authentic Christian worship which integrates reverence and awe (12:28) with complete boldness of access (4:16; 10:19-22) and finds its focus in Jesus (12:2).

Such a perception of God blends well with our author's characteristic approach of drawing diverse threads together to produce an inclusive pattern full of suggestive variety. The high priesthood of Jesus he sees as the unifying "theme", which incorporates for him the many-splendoured truth about God's self-expression in his Son. The major strands of this pattern he displays in his opening two chapters. As his exhortation proceeds, the pattern becomes increasingly complex and often surprising, requiring from his community a fresh way of perceiving, a radical shift in understanding. What was familiar from both their Jewish and Christian background had to be looked at in a new light. Yet, at heart, the pattern radiated simplicity: God has revealed the truth about himself in Jesus his Son, and that active truth could be expressed most comprehensively in terms of self-sacrificing priesthood.

7.11 A possible context for our author's vision

Our author is clearly someone to whom worship meant a great deal. His exhortation to the community is permeated by the language of worship by words such as προσέρχομαι, προσφέρω, ὑμνέω, Θυσία, ὁμολογία, λατρεύω, τὰ ἅγια. His Christian understanding of God as revealed in Jesus is expressed through imagery which is often heavily 'liturgical' (access, priesthood, sacrifice, heavenly worship). His presentation of God is such as to invite and excite worship with reverence and awe yet boldness of approach. The unmistakeable impression he gives through his writing is of one for whom God is to be given primary and direct attention in terms of a fitting acknowledgement, drawing near, listening, receptivity and praise, attitudes which should issue in total commitment and obedience. For our author, perhaps, the essence of it can be summed up in the phrase "looking into Jesus" (12:2 ὁρῶντες εἰς -- Ἰησοῦν). It is in concentrating upon Jesus (cf. 3:1; 12:2), he urges, that we come through to a deeper understanding and worship of God. When we focus on Jesus, we hear the authentic voice of God and discern his character more clearly - and we are both encouraged and challenged. Such, surely, was our author's own personal experience. And it was this experience, integrally linked with his disposition towards worship, which brought to birth his insight into the priesthood of Christ.

That birth was well prepared for. Whoever wrote Hebrews evidently had not a little awareness of the Jewish sacrificial and sacerdotal system. It seems highly likely that he himself was Jewish, perhaps even of Levitical descent²⁹ - though his concentration on the scriptural manifestation of the cultus (and that seemingly not perfect in accuracy³⁰) might combine with his obvious facility for Greek to suggest a Hellenistic Jew of the Dispersion rather than one of Palestinian provenance³¹. Our author's knowledge of and interest in the ritual expression of Judaism would at any rate have prepared the ground for 'seeing' God's work of atonement and restoration in Jesus in terms of priesthood and sacrifice.

So, too, would his familiarity with *Christian* teaching which stressed the willing obedience of Jesus and presented his death as in some way sacrifi-

cial⁹². For our author, this was far more than abstract "doctrinal" knowledge. The person of Jesus was someone with whom he was passionately involved⁹³, someone through whom he related directly and boldly to God. Yet at the same time he was more than a way through, more than an introduction into God's presence. In 'looking into Jesus' our author came to feel that he was contemplating the definitive self-expression of God, God's Son, of eternal reality and significance. Jesus, the Son of God, was radiance of God's glory. Perhaps the personification of divine wisdom in Hellenistic Jewish tradition encouraged him to ponder along these lines⁹⁴. Yet the divine glory associated with Jesus emerged most strikingly out of suffering (cf, e.g. 2:9). Exaltation and redemptive vulnerability were profoundly linked in one who expressed the very nature of God. Divine majesty and divine wisdom had thus to be seen in a fresh perspective.

Such meditation may well have been further stimulated by the spiritual condition of the community with which our author was involved. We have suggested that this group of (probably Jewish) Christians had developed an 'exaltation spirituality' based on the sovereign lordship of Christ and inadequately balanced by an awareness of the need for suffering discipleship. Trying circumstances (interpreted as God's displeasure?) were now tempting them to abandon Christianity altogether and slip back into the safety of Judaism. Our author is urgently concerned to keep them on course and to exhort them to grow through their difficulties into a more mature understanding of God and the committed Christian life. They were indeed right to focus on Jesus at God's right hand, but they needed to ponder far more deeply what that exalted position really said about God and Jesus, and, in consequence, about their own vocation as Christian disciples.

All these factors - our author's burning conviction of the absolute primacy of God, his predilection for worship, his personal experience of God through and in Jesus, his Jewish background and knowledge of Christian teaching, his concern for a Christian community under threat - all these came together as in the context of worship he began to see Jesus as great high priest, crowned with glory and honour because of the sacrificial suffering of death. This insight expressed so well and in such unitive fashion what our

author felt about God and his relationship with humanity. The essence of priesthood was to bring God and humanity together. It was precisely this that Jesus had done to perfection - and he had done so as the self-expression of God: as the incarnation of the eternal Son and as new Adam. Those two were inextricably bound up together in the human, dying and exalted Jesus and both issued from the direct action of God. Such was our author's perception, and it implied astounding things about God. Without in any way diminishing his holiness (a quality in fact underlined by the priestly image), God enters fully into the human condition, lives a life that is 'faithful unto death' and 'offers' his death as the expiation for sin and the inauguration of a new covenant. In so doing, he redefines both priesthood and sacrifice. Priesthood breaks dramatically out of its Jewish limits and sacrifice becomes, not "the blood of bulls and goats" but the offering of a totally obedient and consecrated life⁹⁵ (cf. 10:3-10). Further, in our author's vision priesthood and sacrifice become one. The consecrated life offered is that of the high priest himself - and the high priest is the one through whom God created the world, who upholds the universe by the word of his power and in whom God speaks his definitive word (cf. 1:1-3). Everything that can be said of him can be drawn into the image of priesthood, for in the perfection of that image lies oneness with God and oneness with humanity.

It is a daring picture, and one which draws together our author's theocentricity and devotion to Jesus. It also powerfully portrays the message he longs to get across to his community. They must practise steadfast endurance, remaining utterly faithful to the 'new covenant' God, who has focussed his priestly concern in Jesus his Son, releasing them from the burden of sin and death and making possible that union with him which is both rest and recreation. Yet this could not be achieved without much suffering. It required self-offering to an ultimate degree. There could be no glory without passion. The brethren of Jesus must digest this very carefully. They could not, to be sure, repeat the sacrifice of the great high priest but, in entering into their salvation, they must expect hostility from those who refuse to accept God's word and they must regard it positively as divine training appropriate to privileged children (cf. 12:2ff). Even Jesus had to be made perfect through suffering (2:10; 5:8-9).

This message our author composes carefully into a homily, designed to be read out to the community assembled for worship. Many scholars have pointed to the sermonic qualities of Hebrews. F.F. Bruce, for example, calls it "a homily in written form"⁹⁶, suggesting that its author treated his OT texts "as a 'mashal', a parable or mystery which awaits its explanation"⁹⁷. Buchanan⁹⁸ feels that the "first twelve chapters of Hebrews constitute a complete homiletical midrash" in which "the author has woven and interwoven his major emphases so that they cannot be completely separated from one another". Zuntz prefers to describe it as "a midrash in rhetorical Greek prose"⁹⁹, whereas Caird sees it as a series of sermons based on four main OT passages (Ps. 8; Ps. 95; Ps. 110; Jer. 31:31ff)¹⁰⁰. Aileen Guilding¹⁰¹ makes a rather different selection of scriptures, arguing that the early chapters of Hebrews are commentary on the readings for Pentecost in the three successive years of the Jewish triennial lectionary (Gen. 14-15; Ex. 19; Num. 18). The author drew in addition from Ps. 110, which was read at Pentecost in the third year of the reciting of the Psalter, and in Heb. 12:18ff from the Pentecostal and New Year themes of the giving of the Law, enrolment in heaven and divine judgement. It has to be said, however, that the existence of fixed lectionaries in the first century AD is hard to substantiate¹⁰².

Whatever the precise model and methodology, it seems highly likely that our author is indeed presenting his community with a homily and that its manner of presentation owes much to the preaching of the synagogue¹⁰³. This applies even if we take the view that the background of the Hebrews' community was Hellenistic Judaism, geographically located away from Palestine. Other NT evidence suggests that the scriptures were read and expounded in Hellenistic synagogues as well as in Semitic (cf. Acts 13:15, 27; 15:21) and this is underscored by references in Philo¹⁰⁴. In fact, as Roger Beckwith points out, "the reading of the Scriptures and teaching... are the features of sabbath-day worship mainly stressed by the first century sources"¹⁰⁵. It would appear that this emphasis was widely carried over by the NT churches in their worship assemblies on the Lord's day (cf. e.g. 1 Tim. 4:13) and certainly by the time of Justin Martyr such a pattern was firmly established¹⁰⁶. To see Hebrews as integral to 'the ministry of the word' in a worship service would thus be consistent with a Jewish backcloth and with what seems to have been

early Christian 'liturgical practice' - the reading of Jewish Scripture followed by exposition. Our Epistle clearly refers to a good number of Old Testament texts, woven together, as Buchanan says, in standard midrashic fashion¹⁰⁷. Whether the author was basing his 'word' on particular set lections, either Jewish or Christian, is impossible to say, but it is surely not unlikely that he is picking up on texts (Ps. 110:1 being the dominant one?) which might well be read out in a Christian assembly because they had come to be associated with Jesus. Into these he injects less familiar scriptural material and exegesis, hoping to encourage a fresh and faith-building perspective.

Our author himself describes his writing as a λόγος παρακλήσεως (13:22), a phrase which at Acts 13:15 "clearly denotes a homily"¹⁰⁸. Ἡ παρακλήσις in 1 Tim. 4:13 is generally interpreted as preaching¹⁰⁹ and throughout the Pauline corpus, the word seems to be closely associated with exhorting the faithful (cf., e.g. Rom. 12:8; 15:4, 5; 1 Cor. 14:3). Indeed, David Hill argues that in Paul παρακλήσις should for the most part be regarded as implying "exhortatory preaching", characterised by a constant referring back "to the work of salvation as its presupposition and basis". Its locus, he maintains, "is normally in the worshipping congregation and it contributes to the guidance, correction, encouragement - in short, the *oikodomē* of the community"¹¹⁰. It is, in other words, "pastoral preaching"¹¹¹. Such a description is ideally suited to the word of exhortation which is Hebrews. If it be objected that its length runs counter to such a view, then due consideration should be given to indications from both Jewish and Christian sources that services and sermons were often not brief affairs. We learn from Philo¹¹² that the scripture exposition on a sabbath could go on for much of the day (with a lunch break!) and Josephus, too, suggests that a sabbath day in the synagogue could mean quite literally that¹¹³. A glance at Acts 20:7-12 indicates that Christian assemblies and sermons could also last for some considerable time. By Paul's standards at Troas, our author's word of encouragement (which can be read aloud within an hour) was indeed brief (13:22)¹¹⁴. There are, in fact, broad hints in his exposition that he could have said much more (cf., e.g. 9:5b). Perhaps he shortened his homily to what he considered to be essential because he knew that much of his teaching would

be hard to take in (cf. 5:11ff). It was something to be "endured" (cf. ἀνεχέσθαι 13:22). It is nonetheless clear that our author does not 'force-feed' his community with material that is deliberately 'academic' and obscure. As Kistemaker puts it, he is "a dedicated pastor who watches over the spiritual well-being of his people"¹⁸. It is in this context that we must see the στερὰ τροφή he offers them (cf. 5:14). It is not a sophisticated diet to be taken as an optional extra; the teaching he gave he regarded as integral to their survival and growth as Christians.

The image of food points us towards another possible element in the overall setting of the Epistle. Was the worship service for which the homily was written a Eucharist? Whether the Epistle contains any references to or teaching about the Eucharist is a question which has aroused strong and conflicting responses in scholars. As C.P.M. Jones puts it, "Hebrews has been acclaimed both as the supreme authority for, and as the final condemnation of, eucharistic sacrifice in the NT"¹⁹. Yet, as Jones goes on to say, the Epistle's "references to Christian worship are enigmatic and obscure"¹⁷. It is indeed difficult to extract any clear sacramental teaching from our author's exposition (with regard to either baptism¹⁸ or eucharist). It is hard enough to discern unambiguous eucharistic allusions - so much so that some scholars would deny their existence. Williamson, for example, contends that Hebrews contains no allusions to the eucharist, suggesting that this "may mean that the community addressed did not share in the eucharistic faith and practice of the Early Church"¹⁹. Montefiore would take a similarly negative line²⁰. Further, we do indeed have to take into account the fact that our author makes nothing of the tradition mentioned in Gen. 14 that Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine. Other scholars, however, see eucharistic allusions scattered throughout the Epistle. So, at 6:4, γευσάμενους τε τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς ἐπουρανίου has a sacramental reference²¹, as does the discussion about the Christian "altar" in 13:10-16²². We may say that even if these are to be taken in a eucharistic sense it is not easy to draw from them any suggestion that the sacrament was understood in terms of the sacrificial offering of the body and blood of Christ. The latter was made "once for all" in God's final work of atonement. Hence the only sacrifices that remain to be offered by God's people are those of praise and good living (13:15, 16).

It is nonetheless interesting that at 9:20 our author has used a phrase which seems to relate directly to the dominical words of institution over the cup at the Last Supper as recorded by Mark (14:24) and Matthew (26:28). When talking of the ratification of the Mosaic covenant, the writer refers to Moses' statement as he sprinkled the people with blood as τοῦτο τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης. The saying as recorded in Ex. 24:8 reads ἴδου τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης. It may be, then, that our author's familiarity with τοῦτο in the words of institution (τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἷμα μου τῆς διαθήκης) has caused him (consciously or otherwise) to amend the Exodus quotation²³. Certainly he was greatly concerned with the establishment of a new covenant, involving forgiveness of sins (8:7-10:18) cf. the inclusion of forgiveness in the Matthean words of institution²⁴. Perhaps, then, he saw the eucharist (whatever precise form it took) as a focus for the mediation of the blessings of the new covenant, not least forgiveness and access into God's presence through Jesus. It seems at least possible that from an early stage the New Testament churches associated the 'Markan' tradition of the words over the cup not only with Ex. 24:8²⁵ but also with Jer. 31:31ff²⁶, two passages of considerable importance for our author's argument in chap. 8-10. If we also accept an allusion to Is. 53 in the words of institution²⁷, then it may be significant that Heb. 9:28 contains a similar allusion (εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνεύ-
 ζυγεῖν ἁμαρτίας). In fact, these three OT points of reference, when combined, express some of the major ingredients of our author's whole message - a new covenant which brings forgiveness and heart-knowledge of God (Jer. 31:31ff), ratified by the sacrifice of Jesus (Ex. 24:8) which is expiatory in character (Is. 53). If it is true, as D. Moo maintains, that at the Last Supper through the words over the cup with their OT allusions "Jesus connects his death... with a unique atoning sacrifice that emphasizes the intimate involvement of those who participate"²⁸, then we have a very close link indeed with the approach of the writer of Hebrews.

Could it thus be that our author, in composing his homily, had in mind the community gathered together for a particular kind of worship, i.e. the Lord's Supper commemorated in such a way as to celebrate the inauguration of the new covenant and to participate in its blessings? This might well lead him to allude suggestively to aspects of the service as he sought to move his

people on in their faith and understanding. It would be yet another example of his capacity to start from the familiar in communicating teaching which was hard to digest. He would be linking in, quite literally, where his people were.

9:20 could therefore be a contextual reference of this sort, reminding his community of words they would hear in the service upon which they were engaged. By weaving the phrase into an exposition on the significance of the new covenant as compared with the old covenant, he hopes to open up fresh insights (notably the priesthood of Christ) and strengthen their commitment. We could see other aspects of the Epistle in the same light. The section (8-10) which contains the reference to Ex. 24:8/Mk. 14:24 (9:20) also, as we have seen, takes in reference to Is. 53:12 (9:28) and Jer. 31:31ff (8:7-13; 9:15; 10:15-18). It further contains a statement of eschatological hope which would not be difficult to associate with that looking to the parousia which, according to Paul in 1 Cor. 11:26, characterised the Lord's Supper. Heb. 9:28 talks of Christ, having been offered once for all to bear the sins of many, appearing a second time to save those who are eagerly waiting for him (ὁ Χριστός -- ἐκ δευτέρου -- ὁφθήσεται τοῖς αὐτὸν ἀπεκδεχομένοις εἰς σωτηρίαν cf 10:25).

Yet our author is concerned to go beyond the familiar. He therefore stresses that the covenant blood of Christ is to be understood as bringing to their end all other outpourings of sacrificial blood (cf. 10:5-10)¹²⁹, most particularly that associated with the Day of Atonement (cf., e.g. 9:7-12; 10:24-26). And Christ himself, contends our author, offers his own blood as divine high priest. All the provisions of the old covenant come together and are fulfilled and transcended in Christ, the mediator of the new covenant.

By the blood of Jesus, the blood of the covenant, the Hebrews community have been sprinkled and deeply cleansed, being made participants in that new covenant relationship opened up by Jesus in the offering of his blood and flesh (cf. 9:14, 19-22; 10:19-22; 12:24; 13:12). They can thus approach God, enter the very sanctuary of his presence "with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (10:19-22 cf. 4:16). In urging them to 'draw near' in this way, what context does our author have in mind? It is at least possible that he is

again referring to the activity upon which they are engaged in the Lord's Supper. Here they can truly participate in what has been wrought for them by Christ. Here they can enjoy (and learn from) his company (2:12, 13; 12:24)¹³⁰. Such a context would help to shed light on our author's paradoxical conviction that the brethren of Jesus, while still running the race that is set before them, have in some sense already arrived. In participating in the Lord's Supper, they have come (προσεληλυθότες) "to mount Zion, to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels in festal gathering and to the assembly (ἐκκλησία) of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant and to blood of sprinkling that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel" (12:22-24). It is in meeting together to confess Jesus and encourage one another (10:23-25) in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, in receiving the new covenant blood of sprinkling, that they enter into the worshipping community of heaven, into the reality of the new covenant age, into God's vibrant rest. It is in this sense that they have 'arrived' and "tasted the heavenly gift" (6:4). Indeed, such a worshipping experience should inspire them to persevere in their earthly pilgrimage, remaining steadfast in their allegiance to Jesus. The great privilege and blessing of such worship underlines the seriousness of falling away.

We may compare how Paul in his words to the Corinthians about the Last Supper uses very strong language to warn of the dangers of eating and drinking unworthily. Anyone who does so will be "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord... eats and drinks judgement on himself" and lays himself open to the possibility of weakness, sickness and even death (1 Cor. 11:27-30). It is interesting that the 'severe passages' in Hebrews could likewise be seen as not unrelated to a context of (eucharistic?) worship. 6:6ff follows reference to "those who have once been enlightened (φωτισθέντες = baptised?)¹³¹, who have tasted the heavenly gift and have become partakers of Holy Spirit and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come" (6:4, 5). A worship service centred on the Lord's Supper could well comprehend these experiences¹³². If these people then fall away they (re-)crucify the Son of God and put him to open shame (6:6)¹³³. The exhortation to enter

the sanctuary in 10:19-25 is followed by a dire warning (10:26-31) as to what punishment will be deserved by the one "who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified and outraged the Spirit of grace"³⁴ (10:29). The Lord will indeed judge such people (10:30, 31).

The Epistle to the Hebrews is certainly, as we have said, permeated by the language and ethos of worship. It is strongly sermonic in tone and approach. If it was designed to be delivered at a Christian worship assembly - and this seems the likeliest possibility - then surely it is also highly probable that that assembly would be gathered to commemorate the Lord's Supper. Such seems to have been, in some form or another, a common practice of the NT churches (cf., e.g. Acts 2:42, 46, 47; Acts 20:7, 11; 1 Cor. 10:16; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)³⁵.

We might go even further and suggest that the Hebrews community was engaged on this occasion in a very particular eucharistic celebration which involved re-interpreting a familiar Jewish festival. E. Trocmé has argued that the Passion Narratives emerged out of a *Christian* observance of Passover³⁶. Could it be perhaps that our Epistle was intended to be delivered to a Jewish Christian community met together to celebrate their version of a feast such as Weeks or Tabernacles?

The Feast of Weeks, besides being an offering of first-fruits, came to be associated in various ways with covenantal renewal. Jubilees VI and XV connect it with the Noachic and Abrahamic covenants and, surely by implication, with the Mosaic (cf. Jub. VI.19)³⁷. This latter connection is confirmed by later tradition³⁸. If it was a feature of Jewish observance in the mid-first century AD, then it may be that Jewish Christians used to keeping such feasts would want to mark it in a way that expressed their changed understanding of its significance. This would be but an extension of their (clearly attested) practice of looking at Jewish scriptures through Christian eyes. Such a festival observance would certainly key in with important facets of the message of Hebrews: the stress on the pilgrim and wilderness experience of the people of God (cf., e.g. 3-4; 11); the inauguration through Jesus of a new covenant which fulfils and renders obsolete the old (cf. 8-10); the vivid

picture of the contrast between Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion in 12:18-24; the severe warnings about lack of commitment to the new covenant put in terms of the stringent sanctions obtaining under the old (cf., e.g. 2-3). We might add that Noah (11:7) and Abraham (7:1-10; 11:8-19) also receive attention and that the theme of the earth bearing fruit is not entirely absent (6:7-8)¹³⁹.

G.J. Brooke, however, has suggested another 'festal possibility' in the autumnal feast of Tabernacles¹⁴⁰. He is pointed in this direction by the combination of 2 Sam. 7:14 and Ps. 2:7 at Heb. 1:5, a combination similar to that found in 4QFlor. The Qumran context he regards as "a midrash on texts that have their setting... as part of the liturgy of the Feast of Tabernacles"¹⁴¹. This feast, he argues, involved not only 'Harvest festival' and a remembrance of the people of God living in tents, it also retained something of its early association with the celebration of the kingship of Yahweh¹⁴². If Brooke is right in this latter speculation, it might provide a particular context for that 'enthronement ceremony' which we thought might possibly be behind our author's concern to expound the true character of the exalted glory of Christ¹⁴³.

J.A. Draper, indeed, suggesting that "it would be surprising if a feast which played such a major rôle in the lives of the Jewish people had left no trace on the literature of the early Church"¹⁴⁴, argues that Rev. 7 can be seen as portraying the heavenly and Christian version of the Feast of Tabernacles. He points to the significance of Zech. 14 in this regard, a prophecy which looks forward to the time when "Everyone that survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of booths" (v.16). On that day "the Lord will be one and his name one" and "the Lord will become king over all the earth" (v.9). Draper comments that Heb. 12:22-24 is to be seen as having the same festal and eschatological setting as Rev. 7¹⁴⁵. We could broaden the reference by seeing the whole Epistle in this context. Thus our author would be addressing a community gathered "to worship the King", that King over all the earth who could be called 'Lord' and who was entitled to a 'name' that united him with God (cf. chap.1). Other aspects of our author's homily would also fit this context well, notably the 'pilgrimage theme, the concept of a

heavenly Jerusalem and sanctuary'¹⁴⁶, the stress on obedience and holiness, and perhaps also the notion of a new covenant'¹⁴⁷.

Whether or not we can posit such a specific 'scenario', the point remains that a liturgical setting makes most sense of the character and content of our Epistle. Perhaps, then, we could see Hebrews in a context which bears out W.D. Maxwell's assessment: "The typical worship of the Church is to be found to this day in the union of the worship of the synagogue and the sacramental experience of the Upper Room; and that union dates from New Testament times"¹⁴⁸. We might also feel inclined to add a 'Temple dimension' and then to place our author and his Epistle firmly within the pattern discerned by John Goldingay: "The pattern of the early church points towards an integrating of the spirituality of scripture, preacher, congregation and liturgy into a spirituality of preaching"¹⁴⁹. Such integration makes much sense of Hebrews, bringing together all the elements in the author's situation and creating a homily which speaks powerfully to it. The essence of the matter is captured in another phrase of Goldingay: "Worship is a matter of encounter with God; preaching both emerges from and facilitates that encounter"¹⁵⁰. It is, most fundamentally, our author's encounter with God in worship which has produced his revolutionary and inclusive vision of the priesthood of Jesus and that urgent 'pastoral preaching' which we know as the Epistle to the Hebrews.

- 1 Hebrews 2:17.
- 2 Migne PG 63. 9ff.
- 3 The Antiochenes argued the importance of both the divine and human natures within the Person of Christ. Both were equally necessary to bring about salvation. This stress, however, combined with a drawing back from any 'mixing' of the natures, raised at least a question-mark over the unity of Christ's Person. The Alexandrian school, on the other hand, were in danger of undermining the significance of Christ's humanity by emphasising the vital rôle of the Logos. Theodore of Cyrus (d. 466) betrays an even more explicit 'Antiochene bias' in his commentary on Hebrews. See Migne PG 674ff.

4 Migne PG 63.48.

5 Ibid. 103.

6 Ibid. 105, 106.

7 Ibid. 106: On 7:26. Ὁρᾶς ὅτι περὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος τὸ πᾶν εἴρηται; Ὅταν δὲ εἰπῶ ἀνθρωπότητα, θεότητα ἔχουσαν λέγω, οὐ διαιρῶν, ἀλλὰ ἄφεις τὰ πρέποντα υποπτεύειν.

In what way the Godhead remains undivided is left unclear.

- 8 Ibid. 107.
- 9 Ibid. 131.
- 10 Ibid. 123. See also, e.g. hom. 10 in Rom. In other places Chrysostom sees the Crucifixion as being brought about by the devil and, at the same time, as marking the defeat of the devil and the consequent acquittal of mankind; cf. hom. 67 in Jo. 2 (on John 12:31).
- 11 Ibid. 128.
- 12 Ibid. 129.
- 13 Ibid. 62, 63.
- 14 Ibid. 47. 48. This concern to keep apart the two natures in Christ and to ascribe only the appropriate activities to each nature is well illustrated in other writings of Chrysostom. See, e.g. hom. 7 in Phil. (on Phil. 2:7); in quatr. Laz. 1; in eos qui ad supr. 6.
- 15 Ibid. 71.

- 16 Migne PG 74. 953ff.
- 17 Ibid. 972B.
- 18 Ibid. 961C.
- 19 Ibid. 965B. See also de incarn. unigenis; hom. pasch. 17.
- 20 Ibid. 965C.
- 21 Ibid. 976C.
- 22 Luther's Works. Vol. 29, ed. J. Pelikan and W.A. Hansen, Saint Louis 1968, pp 109-241.
- 23 See, e.g. ibid. p 123 (on 2:3); pp 172-3 (on 5:1); pp 119-20 (on 1:9). Compare his similar treatment of these themes in his slightly earlier Lectures on Romans.
- 24 Ibid. p 112.
- 25 Ibid. pp 170-1.
- 26 p 142. It is interesting to note here that Luther still accepts a significant distinction between "priest" and "people".
- 27 Ibid. p 169.
- 28 Ibid. p 220. It would have been interesting to examine how Luther's views of Heb. 7:25 ("he always lives to make intercession for them") fitted in in this connection. Unfortunately, he does not comment on this verse.
- 29 Ibid. p 220.
- 30 Ibid. pp 164-5.
- 31 Ibid. p 167.
- 32 Ibid. p 196.
- 33 The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews, 1549. Translated by W.B. Johnstone, Edinburgh 1963.
- 34 Ibid. p 33.
- 35 Ibid. p 55.
- 36 Ibid. p 59.
- 37 Ibid. p 59.
- 38 Ibid. p 59.
- 39 Ibid. p 131.
- 40 Ibid. p 56.
- 41 Ibid. p 56ff. It is perhaps significant that the comment comes two years after the Council of Trent's decrees on justification.
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- 42 Ibid. p 58. This was before the Tridentine decree concerning the mass - a decree which did *not*, in fact, define the mass as a sacrifice.
 - 43 Ibid. p 140.
 - 44 A Short Explanation of the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, 1635. Edinburgh 1978.
 - 45 Ibid. p 15.
 - 46 Ibid. p 23.
 - 47 Ibid. p 23.
 - 48 Ibid. p 22.
 - 49 Ibid. p 34.
 - 50 F. Delitzsch, Commentar zum Briefe an die Hebraer, Leipzig 1857 (E.T. 2 vols, Edinburgh 1872).
 - 51 J. Chr. K. von Hofman, Der Schriftstheweis, ein theologischer Versuch, Nordlingen 1852, 1853, 1855.
 - 52 Delitsch I p xi.
 - 53 Ibid. pp xi-xii.
 - 54 Ibid. p 149.
 - 55 Ibid. p 147.
 - 56 Ibid. p 149. For a similar view of this "self-reconciling of the Godhead within itself", see, e.g. P.E. Hughes, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Berdmans 1977.
 - 57 See below, chapter 6.
 - 58 Ibid. p 149. Other commentators who lay stress on Christ's priesthood in terms of the order of Aaron as well as the order of Melchizedek include A.B. Bruce and B.F. Westcott. For a contrary view, see, e.g. A.S. Peake and J. Moffatt.
 - 59 Ibid. p 237.
 - 60 Ibid. p 142.
 - 61 Commentators' views regarding the atonement are often of significance in their interpretation of Hebrews. Neither is this state of affairs limited to the proponents of the penal substitution view. The "subjective theory", for instance, has its effect on the exegesis of A.B. Bruce (cf. p 354: "... the spirit by which Christ offered Himself inspires that full joyful trust in God that gives peace to the guilty conscience... The mind of Christ flows into us through the various channels of admiration,
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sympathy, gratitude and becomes our mind, the law of God written on the heart") and F.D.V. Narborough (cf. p 35, where he sees in Hebrews a doctrine of "vicarious suffering", as opposed to punishment, such as secures remission of sins for the sinner only when it exercises over him a converting influence"). T H Robinson obviously finds the "subjective" approach congenial but feels that, regrettably, it was only at the back of Heb.'s mind (cf. p xix).

- 62 B.F. Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews, London 1889.
- 63 Westcott, p 70.
- 64 Ibid. p 56.
- 65 Ibid. p 137ff..
- 66 Ibid. p 227.
- 67 Ibid. p 230. For a similar view of Melchizedek's "universal priesthood" and its consequences for Christ's priesthood, see E.C. Wickham p xxii.
- 68 Ibid. p 229.
- 69 Ibid. p 230.
- 70 Ibid. p 71.
- 71 J. Moffatt, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Edinburgh 1924.
- 72 Moffatt p xxxii.
- 73 Ibid. p xxxiii.
- 74 Ibid. p xxxiii n. 1
- 75 Ibid. p xl.
- 76 Ibid. p xxxix cf. P.B. Hughes p 270.
- 77 Ibid. p xl.
- 78 Ibid. p xli. Cf. A.B. Bruce pp 338-9: "The important thing in Christ's sacrifice was, not the fact that His blood was shed, but the spirit in which it was shed... The blood shed was corruptible; but the spirit which found expression in Christ's self-sacrifice is the same yesterday, today and for ever... It is that spirit that makes the once for all sacrifice of Christ eternally efficacious."
- 79 Ibid. pp xlii-xliii.
- 80 Ibid. p xliii.
- 81 Most commentators, at least, seem to accept that, to a greater or lesser extent Hebrews was influenced by Philo or, more generally, "the Philonic

atmosphere", though many are careful to stress the contrasts as well as the similarities. A notable exception to this overall trend is to be found in the Commentary of G.W. Buchanan. For a special study that comes to the conclusion that "the Writer of Hebrews had never been a Philonist, had never read Philo's works, had never come under the influence of Philo directly or indirectly", see R. Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Leiden 1970.

- 82 Moffatt p xlvi.
- 83 Ibid. p xlvii.
- 84 Ibid. p xlix.
- 85 Ibid. p 1.
- 86 Ibid. p liv.
- 87 Ibid. p liii.
- 88 Ibid. p xxxiii.
- 89 C. Spicq, *L'épître aux Hébreux*, 2 vols., Paris 1952/53.
- 90 Spicq I p 33.
- 91 Ibid. p 295.
- 92 Ibid. p 297.
- 93 Ibid. p 299.
- 94 Ibid. p 299.
- 95 Ibid. p 303. For examples of a similar approach, see n. 78. Aquinas also stresses the voluntary character of Christ's sacrifice.
- 96 Ibid. p 316ff.
- 97 Ibid. p 317.
- 98 Ibid. p 318. Commentators are very much divided as to whether Heb. alludes to the Eucharist. Even among those who feel that he does, there are differing views as to the implications of the allusions (e.g., as to the nature of the relationship between the offering at Calvary and the offering of the Eucharist). For a fairly full survey of the "commentary evidence" (though one which has a negative intention), see P.E. Hughes p.137ff. To balance this with a survey showing a positive bias, see Spicq I p 316ff. See our discussion below pp 253ff.
- 99 Spicq I p 135.
- 100 C. Spicq, *L'épître aux Hébreux*, Paris 1977, p 18. Cf. Spicq, *L'origine johannique de la conception du Christ-Prêtre dans l'épître aux Hébreux*, in

- 'Aux sources de la tradition chrétienne', p 258ff. See further below, pp 69-73.
- 101 Spicq I p 292.
- 102 Ibid. p 291.
- 103 Ibid. p 252.
- 104 G.W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, New York 1972.
- 105 Buchanan p 247.
- 106 It is interesting to compare this approach with, e.g., Montefiore's interpretation of the text: "The author is similar to Philo in his apparent indifference to Rabbinism" (H.W. Montefiore, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, London 1964, p 8 n.1).
- 107 Buchanan p 247.
- 108 Ibid. p 100.
- 109 Ibid. pp 253-4.
- 110 Ibid. p 83.
- 111 Ibid. p 82.
- 112 For example, om 1:3 there is no discussion of the important word, ἀπαύγασμ
- 113 Buchanan p 97.
- 114 Ibid. p 79ff..
- 115 Ibid. p 37.
- 116 P.E. Hughes, op. cit., n. 56.
- 117 cf. e.g. C.J. Vaughan, A.S. Peake, F.D.V. Warborough, F.F. Bruce.
- 118 Hughes p 13ff. Commentators who would support some kind of "Qumran connection" for Hebrews include O. Michel and J. Bowman. C. Spicq has also modified his views concerning the recipients of the Epistle so as to include among them "a number of ex-Qumranians" (Spicq, "L'épître aux Hébreux, Apollos, Jean-Baptiste. les Hellenistes et Qumran", *Révue de Qumran*, 1 p 365ff.) H.W. Montefiore, however, rejects any direct relationship between Hebrews and Qumranic beliefs, arguing that "our Epistle seems closer to Philo than to Qumran" (Montefiore p 18).
- 119 Hughes p 14.
- 120 Ibid. p 15. See our discussion below pp 38-41.
- 121 Ibid. p 120.
- 122 Ibid. p 122.
- 123 Ibid. p 174.
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124 Ibid. p 269.

125 Ibid. p 270.

126 Ibid. p 262.

127 Ibid. p 180.

- 1 2 Cor. 1:20. On the use of the OT in the NT see, e.g. A.T. Hanson, *Jesus Christ in the Old Testament*, London 1965, *The Living Utterances of God*, London 1983; F.F. Bruce, *The Time is Fulfilled*, Exeter 1978; R.T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, London 1971. See also B.P. Thompson (ed.) *Scripture: Meaning and Method* (A.T. Hanson FS), Hull 1987.
- 2 Mk. 12:36 and pars (Matt. 22:44; Lk. 22:42, 43). cf. also Mk. 14:62 and pars. (Matt. 26:64; Lk. 22:69).
- 3 See, e.g. Acts 2:34, 35; 1 Cor. 15:25; Ephes. 1:20; Col. 3:1; 1 Pet. 3:22. cf. D.M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand*, Nashville 1973; W.R.G. Loader, *Christ at the Right Hand - Ps. cx.1 in the New Testament*, NTS 24, pp 199-217.
- 4 cf. Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12f; 12:2.
- 5 Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:3, 11, 15, 17, 21, 24, 28.
- 6 cf. Spicq's view of Heb. 7, a crucial chapter with regard to the argument for Christ's priesthood: "Tout le chapitre VII n'est pas autre chose qu'une exégèse du Ps. cx, 5" (Spicq II, p 205). See also B. Lindars, *Apologetic*, London 1961, p 51, who maintains in connection with Ps. 110 "it is not too much to say that the entire christology of the Epistle stems from a study of this psalm". Also Williamson, *Philo* p 222 "all that [the author] says about the eternity of Christ and His work is connected with what he had read in Psalm 110 about 'a priest for ever'".
- 7 Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, London 1952, p 104. There seems to be no clear evidence that the Jewish exegesis, when interpreting Ps. 110 *messianically*, saw it as presenting a Messiah who was both King and Priest. Rabbinic evidence would seem to suggest that Messiah and Priest were regarded as two separate figures - though this could well be a reaction against Christian assertion of Christ's priesthood. cf. S-B 111, 696; IV, 457, 461. Hay, *op. cit.*, p 31f comments "The sheer diversity of... interpretations suggests that the rabbis were none too sure what to make of v 4."

For any connection with the Hasmoneans' claim to a Melchizedekian royal priesthood, see Hay at p 24f. See also his summary on p 33.

- 8 See Chapter 3.

- 9 Higgins, The Old Testament and Some Aspects of New Testament Christology, in 'Promise and Fulfilment', ed. F.F. Bruce, Edinburgh 1963, p 138. For the "other places" Higgins refers to, see our discussion in chapter 3.
 - 10 Heb. 7:3.
 - 11 cf. J.A. Fitzmyer, Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament, pp 221-2: "... the detailed comparison of Christ and Melchizedek in Hebrews 7 is an excellent example of a midrash on Genesis 14:18-20". Whatever view one takes of the 'mechanics' of Heb.'s use of the OT (sermon(s), lecture(s), exposition of Jewish lections, 'pesher' exegesis on the Qumran model etc - see further below pp 250-52), the basic question remains - which came first, OT texts or the idea of Christ's priesthood?
 - 12 F.L. Horton, The Melchizedek Tradition, Cambridge 1976.
 - 13 Philo: Leg. Alleg. III.79; De cong. 99.
Josephus: War vi.438.
See Horton, op. cit. p 156ff.
 - 14 Horton, op. cit. p 170.
 - 15 A.T. Hanson, Jesus Christ in the OT, pp 65-72.
 - 16 Ibid. p 72.
 - 17 cf. D. Peterson, Hebrews and Perfection, Cambridge 1982, p 106: "The Melchizedek story is only of interest to him insofar as it explains the assertion of that key verse of prophecy [i.e. Ps. 110:4] and intimates the superiority of the priesthood 'after the order of Melchizedek'".
 - 18 cf. E. Käsemann, Das Wandernde Gottesvolk, Göttingen, 4th ed. 1961.
 - 19 F.F. Bruce, "'To the Hebrews' or 'To the Essenes'?", N.T.S. 9 (1962-3) p 220.
 - 20 cf. especially Heb. 7-9.
 - 21 Scholars who would argue that Jesus made atonement first for his own sin include Buchanan ; R. Williamson, Heb. 4:15 and the Sinlessness of Jesus, Exp. T. vol 86 (1974-5) pp 4-8; J.A.T. Robinson, The Human Face of God, London 1973, p 89.
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22 Note the different words used:

- a) *Θυσίαν* - a general term, but used in the OT with particular reference to the peace-offering;
- b) *προσφοράς* the meal or cereal offering;
- c) *όλοκαυτώματα* whole burnt offerings;
- d) *περί ἁμαρτίας* sin offerings.

cf. F.F. Bruce, p 233f; F. Young, *Sacrifice and the Death of Christ*, London 1975 p 77f.

23 As R. Williamson puts it: "It is a fact of life that the mind is compelled to clothe its ideas in forms drawn from within its experience and background". ('Hebrews and Doctrine', Exp. T. vol 81 (1969-70), p 373)

24 Moffatt, p xlv1.

We may compare G.W. Buchanan's somewhat critical comment, "The author wanted to interpret Jesus' rôle in terms of a priesthood and his death as a priestly sacrifice. Therefore he had to support his position rather defensively on the basis of scripture" (Commentary, p 97).

25 H.C. Keefe's translation in *The OT Pseudepigrapha* (ed. J.H. Charlesworth) , London 1983, vol I p 791. Compare Test. Reuben 6:11ff, where Levi is to "bless Israel and Judah, since it is through him that the Lord has chosen to reign in the presence of all the people. Prostrate yourselves before his posterity, because (his offspring) will die in your behalf in wars visible and invisible. And he shall be among you an eternal king". (op. cit. p 785).

On the Testaments, see in addition to the literature cited below, H.W. Hollander and M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, A Commentary*, Leiden/E.J. Brill 1985; *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha Vol VIII*.

26 Test. Levi 8:1-12. cf. G. Widengren, *Royal Ideology and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* in 'Promise and Fulfilment' ed. F.F. Bruce, Edinburgh 1963, pp 202-12.

27 Test. Levi 18:1-5.

28 Test. Levi 18:9a.

29 Test. Levi 18:9b-14.

30 Test. Levi 4:2-3.

31 cf. e.g. R.H. Charles, Moffatt, Widengren.

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- 32 cf. Jubilees 32:1; Assumption of Moses 6:1; Josephus Ant. xvi. 6:2.
- 33 Compare, e.g., Heb. 11:35f with II Macc. 6:19, 28; 7:1ff; IV Macc. 8:1ff (the martyrdom of Eleazar and the seven brothers): Heb. 12:1f with IV Macc. 17:9f (--- εἰς Θεὸν ἀφορῶντες, καὶ μέχρι θανάτου τῶς βλασφῆμίας ὑπομείναντες.)
- 34 cf. e.g. Moffatt,, p xlvii; Buchanan, p 79f. Both would argue that the Hasmonean priestly rulers had a significant influence on Heb.'s Christology, though they would not regard this as the only factor.
- 35 cf. A. Dupont-Sommer, The Jewish Sect of Qumran and the Essenes, trans. R.D. Barnett, 1954, pp 38-57, who links the Testaments closely with the Qumran literature; M. Philonenko, Les interpolations chrétiennes des Testaments des Douze Patriarches et les Manuscrits de Qumran, 1960, who argues that the Testaments had their origin in the Testament of Levi and that the finished work owes its character to Essene redaction. Christian influence is minimal; A.S. van der Woude, Die messianischen Vorstellungen der Gemeinde von Qumran, 1957, who also believes that the Test. Levi constitutes the origin of the Testaments. He would posit an original Aramaic or Hebrew text. H.C. Kere (op. cit.) suggests a Maccabean date, seeing Christian interpolations as few and peripheral.
- 36 cf. M. de Jonge, The Testaments of the XII Patriarchs, a study of their text, composition and origin, Leiden 1953. In The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the New Testament, 1957, he modifies his position by saying that the Christian edition of the Testaments was the last in a series of redactions, one stage of which may have been entirely Jewish. However, the work as we have it is to be dated in the post-Christian period.
- J.T. Milik, R.B. vol LXII, 1955, p 298, assigns the bulk of the Testaments to a Jewish Christian of the first century.
- 37 cf. R.H. Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, II p 289ff; H.C. Kere in The OT Pseudepigrapha Vol I pp 775-80.
- 38 cf. Higgins The Priestly Messiah, N.T.S. 13 (1966-67), pp 211-39.
- 39 cf. Higgins, art. cit., p 223 (cf. Heb. 7:11 and Test. Reuben 6:8).
- 40 Ibid. p 230. Contrast O. Michel, Der Brief an die Hebräer, Göttingen 1949, p 165ff, where he argues the significance for Hebrews of apocalyptic
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- speculation regarding an eschatological priest, especially in the Testaments.
- 41 Apart from Test. Levi, the only other potentially influential reference in this connection is Test. Reub. 6:7ff, where Levi's offspring is to die "in your behalf.... in wars visible and invisible". There is little hint here, however, of a profound cleansing from sin. We may note, too, that the passage is speaking of *Levi's* offspring (contrast Jesus' genealogical background) and surely refers to a dynasty rather than a messianic individual.
- 42 See, e.g. F.L. Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition*, p 171.
- 43 We may note, further, the importance in Hebrews of Christ's *eternal* priesthood in heaven. The priesthood of Levi or of the Hasmonean kings (cf. Test. Reub. 6:7ff; Jubilees 32:1) is "for ever" in the sense of being perpetually in that family in earth.
- 44 See, e.g. H. Kosmala, *Hebräer-Essener-Christen*, Leiden 1959; Y. Yadin, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Epistle to the Hebrews*, in *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, vol IV, ed. C. Rabin and Y. Yadin, Jerusalem 1965, pp 36-55; P.E. Hughes, pp 10-15.
- 45 Yadin, *op. cit.*, p 53.
- 46 cf. e.g. J. Daniélou, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Primitive Christianity*, 2nd ed., Baltimore 1963, pp 18ff; G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls, Qumran in Perspective*, London 1977, pp 125-30.
- 47 F.F. Bruce, 'To the Hebrews' or 'To the Essenes?', *art. cit.*, p 232.
- 48 E. Grässer, *Der Hebräerbrief*, 1938-63, T.R. 30 (1964-65), pp 138-236. On Hebrews and Qumran, see pp 171-7.
- 49 Montefiore, *Commentary*, pp 16-18
- 50 See, e.g. the articles by R. Brown and K.C. Kuhn cited in n. 54 below.
- 51 cf. Heb. 5:5; 9:14, 28; 11:26.
- 52 A.J.B. Higgins, *The Priestly Messiah*, pp 211-39.
- 53 1QSa ii 12, 20 (the Messiah); 1QSa ii 14 (the Messiah of Israel); 4Q patr. 3 (the righteous Messiah): fragment 30, line 2, Cave 1 (the holy Messiah); CD xii. 23f; xiv.19; xix 10f (the Messiah of Aaron and Israel); CD xx.1 (the Messiah from Aaron and from Israel); 1QS ix.10f (the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel).

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- 54 Higgins, op. cit., p 218. Contrast, e.g. R. Brown, *The Messianism of Qumran*, CBQ 19 (1957), pp 53-82 and K.G. Kuhn, *The Two Messiahs of Aaron and Israel in 'The Scrolls and the NT'* ed. K. Stendahl, New York 1957, pp 54-64. On this question, see also P.E. Hughes, p 13; J.A. Fitzmyer, *Essays on Semitic Background of the NT*, pp 127-60.
- 55 Ibid. p. 218. Higgins seeks to bolster his argument by pointing out that "The lay and priestly constitution of the community is frequently described by the use of the names Israel and Aaron". He cites CD 1,7f; vi.2f; 1QS viii.4-6; ix.6; v.6, 21f.
- 56 Ibid. p 234.
- 57 Heb. 1:3.
- 58 11Q Melchizedek.
- 59 11Q Melch. lines 13-14 (using the translation of J. Fitzmyer, *Essays*, cit. in n.54), pp 248-51.
- 60 Lines 9-10 (Fitzmyer) read:

9. he has decreed a year of good favour for Melchize[dek] 1...
and the holy ones of God for a reign of judgement. As it is written
10. about it in the songs of David, who said, "Elohim has [talken
his stand in the as[sembly of 'El], in the midst of gods he
gives judgement"

F.L. Horton (*The Melchizedek Tradition*, p 168) believes that the quotation is a reference to Melchizedek and argues in relation to Heb. 1:8 (where the Son appears to be addressed as God) that "the possibility of a figure other than Yahweh being addressed as $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ is enhanced by the precedent of 11Q Melchizedek..."

J. Carmignac, *Le document de Qumran sur Melkisedeq*, Rev. Q7 1970, pp 343-78, argues, however, that line 10 refers to God himself. The main theme of the document as a whole is not Melchizedek but God's execution of judgement and Melchizedek is, in any case, not a heavenly being but an historical person belonging to the Qumran community.

- 61 M. de Jonge and A.S. van der Woude (11Q Melchizedek and the NT, N.T.S. 12 (1965-66) pp 301-26) point out that the function of Melchizedek as a heavenly deliverer who protects the faithful people of God and as chief of the heavenly hosts runs parallel with that of the archangel Michael in
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the D.S.S. However, they allow that nowhere in the currently available Qumran texts are Michael and Melchizedek explicitly identified. Such an identification is found only in certain medieval Jewish texts, e.g. Jalkut chadasch f. 115, col.3, num.19; Midr. Haneelam Lech. 25. Fitzmyer, op. cit., p 255, says the question of whether the author of 11Q Melch. considered Melchizedek to be the archangel Michael is "impossible to answer".

62 11Q Melch. line 13.

63 11Q Melch. lines 6 & 7. The fragmentary character of these lines leaves unclear the exact nature of this final atonement and Melchizedek's relationship with it. See G.J. Brooke, Exegesis at Qumran, Sheffield 1985, p.323, where he argues that the main texts underlying 11QM (which he sees as Lev. 25 and Is. 61:1-3) "had their setting within early Jewish liturgy", on or around the Day of Atonement.

64 de Jonge and van de Woude, op. cit., p 322f.

See also M. Delcor, Melchizedek from Genesis to the Qumran Texts and the Epistle to the Hebrews, JSJ 2, 1971, pp 115-135. He believes that the epistle was addressed to priests of Essene origin and argues that it was a proof of the author's apologetic skill "to take his starting-point for an exposition of Christ's priesthood in the very beliefs shared by those with whom he was discussing the question of Melchizedek who was to play a rôle at the time of the judgement in the eschatological age" (pp 126-7). R.W. Longenecker, The Melchizedek Argument of Hebrews: a Study in the Development and Circumstantial Expression of New Testament Thought in 'Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology', Grand Rapids 1978, pp 161-85, also suggests that the author was "addressing people who, prior to their conversion probably held Melchizedek in very high esteem" (p 174) and argues that "in 11Q Melch. we have an important key for the understanding of the treatment of Melchizedek in the letter" (p 172).

65 Fitzmyer, op. cit., p 254.

66 Horton, op. cit., p 167.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid., p 169.

69 Only a tenuous and unclear reference in lines 6 & 7.

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- 70 cf. G.W. Trompf, *The Conception of God in Hebrews 4 v 12, 13*, *Studia Theologica* vol 25 (1971), pp 123-32.
- 71 cf. the 'Melchizedekian heresy' countered in, e.g., Epiphanius, *Haer.* 55.1, 5; 55.8, 1-5; Ps.-Tertullian, *Adv. Omnes Haereses* 8. According to Ps.-Tertullian, the verse "tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchizedek" was quoted as proof of Christ's inferiority to Melchizedek. It would seem that misunderstanding of Hebrews played a large part in producing such heretical views, cf. Horton, *op. cit.*, p 164. See also G. Bardy, *Melchisedek dans la tradition patristique*, *RB* 35 (1926), pp 496ff; 36 (1927) pp 25ff.
- 72 For a discussion as to whether Philo's allegorical treatment of the priest-king influenced the author of Hebrews see below pp 54-5.
- 73 Christology, p 85.
- 74 Gottesvolk, p 130.
- 75 For discussion of 'Melchizedek speculations', see further F.J. Jerome, *Das geschichtliche Melchisedek - Bild und seine Bedeutung im Hebräerbrief*, Freiburg 1920; O. Michel, "Μελχισεδεκ", *TWNT* IV pp 573ff; *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, p 160; see also the extensive bibliography in Spicq II, p 213f.
- 76 D.M. Hay, *Glory*, p 143. Also Peterson, *Perfection*, p 106; for quotation see n 17 above.
- 77 cf. Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jub. 1:29; 1 Enoch 20:5.
- 78 cf. *Ass. Mos.* 10:1f.; *Test. Dan.* 6:1f.
- 79 *Ibid.*
- 80 cf. 1QM xvii.
- 81 So, e.g. M. de Jonge & A.S. van der Woude, *art. cit.*, see n. 61.
- 82 Probably Michael. See R.H. Charles, *Pseudepigrapha*, p 335.
- 83 Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24.
- 84 Hagigah 12b; Zebohim 62a; Menaboth 110a.
See further W. Lueken, *Michael*, Göttingen 1898, p 30.
- 85 cf. e.g. 1 En. 15:2; 39:5; 47:2; 99:3; 104:1. cf. II Bar. 6, 7.
- 86 cf. e.g. J. Ber 13a, where direct communication with the Lord is enjoined: "If a man is in distress, let him not call on Michael or Gabriel but let him call direct on me and I will hearken to him straightway." See also IV Ezra 7:102-15. The Babylonian Talmud seems to allow angelic mediation
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- if the prayer is in biblical Hebrew, the angels being ignorant of Aramaic!
cf. B. Shab. 12b, b. Sot. 33a.
- 87 cf. 1 En. 12:3; 15:1; 92:1; 2 En. 23.
- 88 1 En. 12-15.
- 89 1 En. 71:14 (rejecting R.H. Charles' emendation of the text from second to third person). If Enoch is to be identified with the Son of Man, it would seem that, at least, he had a pre-existent election - if not existence: cf. 1 En. 48:3, 6; 62:7. However, there is no suggestion that he is agent and sustainer of creation or $\lambda\alpha\acute{\upsilon}\gamma\alpha\sigma\mu\alpha$ and $\chi\alpha\rho\alpha\tau\acute{\eta}\rho$ of God (contrast Heb. 1:2, 3). There is the further problem of the dating of 1 En. 38-71 (i.e. the Similitudes). Are they pre-Christian in origin? If so, why are they absent from the fragments of 1 En. found at Qumran? For a discussion, see A.J.B. Higgins, *The Son of Man in the Teaching of Jesus*, Cambridge 1980, p 20.; E. Isaac, 1 Enoch, in J.H. Charlesworth, *The OT Pseudepigrapha*, pp 6f and bibliography on p 12.
- 90 Is it pre- or post-Christian? If the latter, how far has it been influenced by Christianity? See, e.g. A. Vaillant, *Le livre des secrets d'Enoch*, Paris 1952, p viiiff; F.L. Anderson, (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch, in Charlesworth op. cit., pp 94-7.
- 91 2 En. 64:5A; cf. 64:5B, "the taker away of our sins". A context of intercession would seem to be called for by, e.g., 53:1 (AB).
- 92 2 En. 22:4-10 (AB). In 1 En. 62 we have a picture of the Elect One/Son of Man as the enthroned judge. Whilst the theme of exaltation might seem reminiscent of Hebrews, the strong emphasis of the Son of Man's judgement of "all the kings and the mighty" is not apparent in the Epistle.
- 93 cf. C.K. Barrett, *Jesus and the Gospel Tradition*, London 1967, p 95,
- 94 Heb. 11:5 quotes from Gen. 5:24 LXX almost verbatim. The LXX of Gen. 5:21-24 describes Enoch as being "well-pleasing" to God, rather than "walking with God" as in the Hebrew text. It is the former description of which Heb. makes use.
- 95 3 En. xlviii C7, xlii.5, xlviii Di. (cf. H. Odeberg, *The Hebrew Book of Enoch*, Cambridge 1928, P. Alexander, (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch, in Charlesworth, op. cit., pp 223-53,

- 96 Hagigah 15a.
- 97 O. Hofius, *Der Vorhang vor dem Thron Gottes*, Tübingen 1972; cf. H.M. Schenke, *Erwägungen zum Ratsel des Hebräerbriefes* in 'Neues Testament und christliches Existenz', Tübingen 1973, ed, H.D. Betz & L. Schottroff, pp 421-37; R. Williamson, *The Background of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Exp. T. 87, 1975-6. pp 232ff. See also on Merkabah mysticism in rabbinic Judaism, D.J. Halperin, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature*, American Oriental Soc. vol 62, New Haven, Connecticut 1980.
- 98 Williamson, op. cit., p 234.
- 99 Ibid., p 235f.
- 100 Ibid., p 235.
- 101 For a discussion of Hebrew's use of beliefs concerning angels, see further Williamson op. cit. pp 163-70 and in the present work pp 114-21. On the notion of a heavenly sanctuary, see further pp 155-57.
- 102 Matt. 27:51; Mk. 15:38; Lk. 23:45.
- 103 For a summary of the "different highly coloured traditions concerning the pargod" see G. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, New York 1974, p 18.
See also 3 Enoch XLV in H. Odeberg, *The Hebrew Book of Enoch*, Cambridge 1928, p. 141ff, with notes.
- 104 See Scholem, op. cit., p 18. In 3 En.x, Metatron is described as having a tabernacle of his own.
- 105 See pp 67f; 155-57.
- 106 There is a variety of interpretation:-
a) 'Flesh' constitutes the 'veil' of Christ's divinity. So, e.g. Chrysostom, Leo the Great, Calvin. The latter well sums up this approach in his comment, "[Christ's] flesh is not to be despised because it conceals like a veil the majesty of God and since it is that which directs us to the enjoyment of all God's benefits" (p 141 of the W.B. Johnston translation).

- b) 'Flesh' as a definition of the 'new and living way'. So, e.g. Westcott, the N.E.B. translation. It must be said that this is not the most natural reading of the Greek text.
 - c) 'Flesh' is identical with 'the veil' in the "double function of hiding the true sanctuary and making the entrance to it possible". So H.A. Dahl, *A New and Living Way: The Approach to God according to Heb. 10:19-25*, Interpretation 5, 1951, p 405.
Compare F.F. Bruce, p 247: "The veil which, from one point of view, kept God and man apart can be thought of from another point of view as bringing them together, for it was one and the same veil which on one side was in contact with the glory of God and on the other side with the need of men. So in our Lord Godhead and manhood were brought together".
 - d) The 'veil' stands for the flesh of Christ which "had to be rent before the blood could be shed, which enabled him to enter and open God's presence for the people". So Moffatt, p. 143. Compare Hughes p 409. Owen had taken a similar line (vol. XXIII, p 505-7).
- 107 P.E. Hughes, p 408.
- 108 J. Owen, vol. XXIII, p 506.
- 109 A phrase used by Prof. Grunewald in a public lecture entitled "Phases in Jewish Mysticism" delivered at the University of Durham 15th February 1983: "In Jewish mystical visions God is a silent God".
- 110 See Scholem, op. cit., p 15: "The aspirant placed his head between his knees...At the same time, he recited hymns of an ecstatic character."
- Fasting and ablutions were also an important part of the preparation. It seems there was also a special technique for awakening a mystic from a trance. One had to touch his knees with an "unclean" cloth.
- 111 T. Hag. 2:1 A1-A5.
- 112 contra J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the time of Jesus*, London 1969, pp 237ff. He maintains that Heb. 6:1-10:18 "reads like a lesson (in Christology) which must be revealed only to those capable of understanding". (p 240)
- 113 Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls, Qumran in Perspective*, quotes 1QS 11:7-9:-

[God] has caused [His chosen ones] to inherit
the lot of the Holy Ones,
He has joined their assembly
to the Sons of Heaven,
to be a Council of the Community
a foundation of the Building of Holiness,
an eternal Plantation throughout all ages to come.

He comments, "only the initiates of their own 'new Covenant' were to be reckoned among God's elect and, as such, united already on earth with the angels of heaven".

114 The passage quoted at n. 113 does not necessarily imply a generally enjoyed mystical experience on the part of the members of the Community. It may refer to members of an inner group of the Community, suggesting that they also have membership of the 'heavenly' Council. For the view that the 'Council of the Community' in fact referred to the whole membership, see M.A. Knibb, *The Qumran Community*, Cambridge 1987, pp 129-30.

115 Scholem, *Kabbalah*, p 15f.

116 For a discussion of the possible interpretations of *ἐμολογία* in Hebrews, see Chapter 3, pp 92-4

117 cf. J.D.G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, London 1980, p 212: The author of Hebrews, in espousing a Wisdom christology at the outset of his epistle, asserts "that Christ fully embodies the creative and saving activity of God, that God in all his fullness was in him, that he represents and manifests all that God is in his outreach to men".

See further Chapter 4 below.

118 De vit. M.I. 1.

119 De vit. M.II.187.

120 Quod Deus 156.

121 Qu. in Ex. 49.

122 De vit. M.I.155.

123 Qu. in Ex. 46.

124 De somn. I.164ff. E.R. Goodenough, in the course of his discussion on The Mystic Moses in 'By Light Light', New Haven 1935, pp 197-234, comments "Philo sees in Moses an active and present power, and the prayer to Moses

for guidance, light and anointing, is precisely such a prayer as Christian mystics have for centuries been addressing to Christ."

- 125 De vit. M.I.155.
- 126 Cf. e.g. De migr. Alr. 23, where Moses is called "the Law-giving Word"
- 127 Cf. F. Copleston, A History of Philosophy, Vol 1, New York 1947, p 461. Compare S. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria, New York/Oxford, 1979, p 25. For Philo, "Spiritual perfection is the successful arrival by an individual to the point at which his soul is completely freed from the baleful influence of the body... He who achieves spiritual perfection, as it were leaves this world, the sensible world, behind him and enters the lofty world of ideas, the intelligible world wherein immortality abides".
- 128 See S. Sandmel, op. cit., p 95f.
- 129 See F.F. Bruce,, p 56, where he says "The combining of the two rôles of divine envoy and priest in one person is not common in the Old Testament; it appears only in a few outstanding characters, among whom Moses occupies a special place". However, he has to base his description of Moses as priest on Moses' intercessory activity, a function not exclusive to priests.
- 130 Heb. 3:2-6, 16 (Moses as servant in God's house); 7:14 (Moses as author of Scripture); 8:5 (Moses as agent of the old covenant); 9:19-21 (as 8:5); 10:28 (the Law of Moses); 11:23-28 (Moses as an example of faith); 12:21 (Moses at Mount Sinai).
- 131 See further, M. R. D'Angelo, Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews, SBL Dissertation Series 42, 1979. Here it is argued that the significance of Moses in Heb. is as a "visionary" who sees and reflects the glory of the invisible God. This picture, D'Angelo suggests, is formed by our author's understanding of Christ, rather than the other way round.
- 132 E Käsemann, Gottesvolk.
- 133 op. cit., p 140.
- 134 Cf. R.H. Fuller, The Foundations of New Testament Christology, London 1965, pp 93ff. J.D.G. Dunn, Christology, p 99: "There is nothing of any substance to indicate that a gnostic redeemer myth was already current at the time of Paul. On the contrary, all the indications are that it was a post-Christian (second century) development using Christian beliefs about Jesus as one of its building blocks".
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- See also M. Hengel, *The Son of God*, Philadelphia 1976, p 33: "In reality there is no gnostic redeemer myth in the sources which can be demonstrated chronologically to be pre-Christian". See also W. Manson, *Jesus the Messiah*, London 1943, pp 174-90
- 135 See, e.g. W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, Cambridge 1948, p 46f: "Adam was conceived as being created immortal, one day in his life might correspond to a thousand years. Adam was also possessed of a glory derived from God himself. There was an indescribable brightness in his face... The light which he possessed enabled him to see throughout the world... [He] was worthy of the worship of the angels".
- 136 Leg. Alleg.1.31. See also Leg. Alleg.1.53f; Opif. 134; Qu. Gen. 1.4.
- 137 See J.D.G. Dunn, *Christology*, chap IV, pp 98-128.
- 138 See below p 87; pp 105-6; 128-9; 177-9.
- 139 So Vita Adae 25-29; Apoc. Mos. 3. "Adam is here apparently equivalent to the fallen First man, who then lives on in all his descendants", R.H. Fuller, *Foundations*, p 95.
- 140 Käsemann, *Gottesvolk*, pp 98-105.
- 141 Ibid., p 90.
- 142 Ibid., p 90.
- 143 Ibid., pp 125-40.
- 144 See below pp 54-5. In one treatise, Philo does seem to identify the 'heavenly Man' with the Logos (Conf. 41, 62f, 146f) but this paucity of reference combined with Philo's allegorical inconsistency should advise caution in assuming too readily that Logos=High Priest=Man was for him a standard identification.
- 145 Melchizedek/Shem pp 38-41; Moses pp 50-2; Michael pp 41-2; Metatron pp 44-9.
- 146 Cf. S-B IV pp 457; 460ff See also Targ. Jerus I, Exod.xl.10 ("Elijah, the great priest who is to be sent at the end of captivity"); Deut. xxx.4 ("Though you may be dispersed unto the ends of the heavens, from thence will the Word of the Lord gather you together by the hand of Elijah the great high priest and from thence will He bring you by the hand of the King Messiah"). (Translations by J.W. Etheridge, *The Targums on the Pentateuch*, I 1862, p 577 and II 1865, p 653).
- 147 See below, chapter 7 pp 247-58.

- 148 E. Menegoz, 'Las théologie de l'épître aux Hébreux, Paris 1894, p 198. Quoted in Spicq I, p 91.
- 149 So, e.g. Montefiore, Commentary, p 18; Hering, Commentary, p 10.
- 150 J. Coppens, Les affinités qumrâennes de l'épître aux Hébreux, Nouvelle Revue Théologique, LXXXIV 1962, pp 277-9.
- 151 Quis rer. 205.
- 152 J.D.G. Dunn, Christology, p 173.
- 153 R. Williamson, Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews, Leiden 1970, p 430.
- 154 It is perhaps implied in 1:1-2. 4:12 would seem to refer most naturally in its context to a characteristic of the Creator God. E.F. Scott, Hebrews, p 166, argues however "The Logos doctrine, although it seems to disappear after the opening chapter, is implicit in the argument throughout."
- 155 R. Williamson, op. cit., p 430.
- 156 Ibid., p 433f.
- 157 J.D.G. Dunn, Christology, p 170
- 158 See below, pp 107-9.
- 159 See below, pp 107-9.
- 160 Buchanan, p 246.
- 161 cf. Moffatt, p xxxix. The author of Hebrews "deliberately ignores" ideas like "the merits of the fathers or the atoning efficacy of martyrdom in the past to facilitate the approach of sinful men to God".
- 162 See also 2 Macc. 7:33, 37, 38; 4 Macc. 17:21-2.
- 163 See below pp 206-9 for a discussion of ἱλασμοδοτεῖ in this verse.
- 164 See, e.g. G. Vermes, Redemption and Genesis XXIII, in Scripture and Tradition in Judaism, pp 193-227; C.T.R. Hayward, The Aqedah, Appendix to S. Sykes' article in 'Sacrifice', ed.M.F.C. Bourdillon and Meyer Fortes; M. Wilcox, Upon the Tree, JBL 96, 1977, pp 85-99; R. Daly, The Soteriological Significance of the Sacrifice of Isaac, CBQ XXXIX 1977, pp 45-75; R. Longenecker, The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity, London 1979; J. E. Wood, Isaac Typology in the NT, NTS14, 1968, pp 583-9; N.A. Dahl, The atonement - An Adequate Reward for the Aqedah? in E.E. Ellis and M. Wilcox (ed) Neotestamentica et semitica, Edinburgh 1969, pp 15-29
- For a contrasting view, see P.R. Davies, The Sacrifice of Isaac and Pass-over, Studia Biblica 1978 vol I, pp 127-32
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- 165 Vermes, *Redemption and Gen. XXII*, p 215. He cites, e.g. Rom. 8:32; Gal. 3:6-29.
- 166 Ibid. p 216f.
- 167 R. Daly, *Origins*, p 47. See also his article cited in n. 164 above.
- 168 P.R. Davies, art. cit., p 130.
- 169 Ep. Barnabas 7:3.
- 170 See also Irenaeus, *Contra haereses* IV, 5.4; Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* III, 18 and *Adversus Judaeos* X
- 171 IV Macc. 13:12; 16:20; Palestinian Targum to Gen. 22:10; Josephus, *Antiquities* 1:232; Ps.-Philo *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 32:2-4 and Philo, *de Abrahamo* 172
- 172 Vermes, art. cit., p 215
- 173 R.N. Longenecker, *Christology*, p 116
- 174 F.F. Bruce, *Commentary*, p 312
- 175 See below, pp 209-11
- 176 See below, Chapter 6
- 177 Vermes, art. cit., p 215. cf. also R. Daly, *Origins*, p 48f.
- 178 We may note that 1 Jn. 3:8 talks of the Son of God destroying the works of the devil
- 179 Jub. 17, 15-18, 19. See P.R. Davies, art. cit., who argues that Jubilees follows closely the biblical account and that the connection between the sacrifice of Isaac and the Passover festival is only implicit and, in effect, incidental. Other events were also brought into association with Passover, e.g. the completion of Noah's ark, Abraham's sacrifice at Shechem and Jacob's dream at Bethel
- 180 See pp. 176-79
- 181 Westcott, *Commentary*, p 55. cf. F.F. Bruce, *Commentary*, p 51. cf. P.E. Hughes p 118f, who applies the phrase in the first instance to "the covenantal seed of Abraham" i.e. Christ and all those who are spiritually incorporated with him by faith. G.W. Buchanan, p. 36, takes the phrase to mean Israel. Compare anarthrous use of the phrase in Jn. 8:33, 37; Rom. 9:7ff; 11:1; 2 Cor. 11:22
- 182 See discussion below, p 176-77
- 183 So Vermes, art. cit.
- 184 So, e.g., R. Daly, *Origins*, p 50, who regards Rom. 8:32 as a "certain" reference and Jn. 3:16 as "probable"
- 185 See pp 88-9; 109-11
- 186 For an interesting discussion of Hebrews as an example of that "pastoral preaching... [which] was characteristic of the Christian prophet's ministry", see D. Hill, *NT Prophecy*, Atlanta 1979, p 141ff
- 187 Notably F.D.V. Warborough, J. Moffatt, E.F. Scott, J. Jeremias
- 188 So also, e.g., G. Milligan, A.S. Peake, W. Neil, A. Nairne
- 189 M.E. Clarkson, *The Antecedents of the High Priest Theme in Hebrews*, *Anglican Theological Review* 29, 1947, pp 89-95
- 190 Ibid, p 93f
- 191 Ibid, p 92. See further below, pp 67-77
- 192 C. Spicq, *L'épître aux Hébreux*, *Apollos*, Jean-Baptiste, les Hellenistes et Qumrân, *Revue de Qumrân* 1 (1958-9) pp 365ff
- 193 Y. Yadin, *Scripta Hierosolymitana* IV (1965) pp 36ff
- 194 F.F. Bruce, "'To the Hebrews' or 'To the Essenes'?", *NTS* 9 (1962-3) pp 217-32
- 195 See below, chapter 7

1. R. Williamson, *Hebrews and Doctrine*, Exp.T. 81 (1969-70) p 375.
2. Ibid.
3. A.B. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Edinburgh 1899, p 10f.
4. T.H. Robinson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, London 1933, p 1.
5. D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, London 1970, p 723.
6. O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, London, 1963, p 104.
7. Rev. 1:13 cf. Dan. 7:13; Rev. 1:14 cf. Dan. 7:9. See further M. Casey, *Son of Man, The Interpretation and Influence of Daniel 7*, London 1979, p.146.
8. Rev. 1:15 cf. Ezek. 1:7 (feet like burnished bronze); Ezek. 43:2 (the sound of the returning glory of God). See also G.B. Caird, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*, London 1966, p 25f.
9. E. Käsemann, *Gottesvolk*, p 130 sees in Rev. 1:13 a trace of that Anthropos-High Priest redeemer myth which he believes lies behind the presentation of Christ in Hebrews.
For a summary of rabbinic ideas concerning the glory of Adam before the Fall, see W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, London, 1948, p.45.
10. Westcott, *Christus Consummator*, London 3rd ed. 1890, p. 70f believes that the ordination ritual of Lev. 8 is certainly part of the 'agenda' at 10:19ff. The passage refers to baptism, which involves entry into membership of the new covenant 'people of God' and entry into the new (i.e. Christ's) priesthood.
11. Spicq, op.cit., vol. 1 p.134f. For a similar view see also M.E. Clarkson, *The Antecedents of the High Priest Theme in Hebrews*, *Anglican Theological Review*, 29, 1947, pp 89-95.
12. Spicq, op. cit. pp 109-138. See also C. Spicq, *L'origine johannique de la conception du Christ-prêtre dans l'épître aux Hébreux in Aux sources de la tradition chrétienne* (M. Goguel FS), Paris, 1950, pp.258-69, where he argues that Hebrews took over the concept of Jesus as high priest from the Johannine writings. cf. C.J.A. Hickling, *John and Hebrews: The Background of Hebrews 2:10-18*, *NTS* 29 (1983) pp 112-16.
13. R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, London 1971, Vol. 2, p 920.
14. See C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 2nd ed., London 1978, p.550.
B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, London 1972, p.577.
15. Lindars, op. cit. p 578.

16. Barrett, op. cit. p 550.
 17. Spicq, L'épître aux Hébreux, Paris 1977, p 18.
 18. Barrett, op. cit. p 385.
 19. Cullmann. op. cit. p 107.
 20. Ibid. p 106.
 21. First used by Chytraeus, a Protestant theologian.
 22. See PG74, 505.
 23. Lindars, op. cit. p 528f.
 24. There are a number of possibilities, e.g. the Passover Lamb; the Suffering Servant; the binding of Isaac; the messianic apocalyptic figure who would purge his people of evil; the Paschal interpretation of the Last Supper and the eucharist. See Barrett, op. cit. p 176f for discussion.
 25. cf. Barrett, op. cit. p.177, "By his amalgamation of Old Testament ideas John indicates that the death of Jesus was a new and better sacrifice."
 26. According to John, Jesus was crucified at the time when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple (Jn. 19:14, 31). Jn. 19:36 may well be an allusion to Ex. 12:10 LXX (cf. Num. 9:12), which orders that not a bone of the Passover lamb must be broken.
 27. J.L. Houlden, Priesthood in the New Testament and the Church Today, Studia Evangelica Vol. V Part II 1965, p 84.
 28. Barrett, op. cit. p 511.
 29. Spicq, Hébreux 1977, p 18.
 30. D. Peterson, Perfection, p 22 n.92
 31. See above p 24 for Buchanan's views. See also Chapter 2, n. 21.
 32. A.M. Ramsey, The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ, London 1949, p 44f.
 33. A.E.J. Rawlinson, The New Testament Doctrine of Christ, London 1926, p 189 suggests that "the writer of Hebrews may be regarded as having anticipated, or perhaps actually influenced, the theology of the Fourth Gospel" - an interesting reversal of the line taken by Spicq.
 34. See, e.g. the comments *ad loc.* in Brooke, Westcott and Dodd.
 35. For a discussion of each view see C.H. Dodd, The Johannine Epistles, London 1946, p 25ff (expiation), and L. Morris, The Cross in the New Testament, Exeter 1976. p 347ff (propitiation).
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36. cf. Dodd, Commentary, p. 26: "The reference in 1.7 to the blood of Christ suggests that the author is thinking in the first place of the death of Christ as analogous to animal sacrifices (much in the same way, perhaps, as is set forth in the Epistle to the Hebrews; see Heb.ix-x)".
37. A.J.B. Higgins, *The OT and Aspects of NT Christology*, p 140. Brooke and Westcott also see a 'priestly reference' here: see their commentaries *ad loc.*
38. So R. Brown, NTS XIII, 1967, pp 112-32.
39. E. Best, *1 Peter*, London 1971; H. Windisch, *Die Katholischen Briefe* (Handbuchen zum NT), 3rd ed. by Preisker, Tübingen 1951. See their comments on 1 Pet. 2:24 *ad loc.*
40. See G. Vermes, *Redemption and Genesis XXII*, in *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, *Studia Post Biblica*, Leiden, Brill 1973 and C.T.R. Hayward, *The Aqedah*, art. cit. See above at pp. 61-2
41. See Vermes, art. cit. and A. Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, London 1958, p 228.
42. Chapter 2, pp 58-63.
43. See especially J.A.T. Robinson, *Twelve New Testament Studies*, London 1962, p 171f. Most commentators favour some connection with baptism here.
44. For an outline of the various ways in which 1 Peter has been seen in a baptismal setting, see Best, op. cit. p 20ff.
45. Spicq I p 142. cf. E.G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 2nd ed. London 1947, who argues that the close correspondences between Hebrews and 1 Peter point to Silvanus as the author of Hebrews.
46. For a full rehearsal of the possible affinities, see Selwyn, op. cit., p 384ff.
47. The author of Ephesians surely has a picture of the Jewish Temple in mind as he writes this whole passage. See F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, in *Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians*, Grand Rapids 1984, p 297f with notes.
48. Spicq I, p 135,
49. For Spicq and Clarkson's theory that the incentive lay in a community of converted priests, see Chapter 2. pp 64-5,
50. W. Manson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews, An Historical and Theological Reconsideration*, London 1951,

51. Note also in Rom. 8:28-30 the interplay of ideas between 'Son', 'image', 'brethren' and 'glory' and compare Heb. 1 and 2. See chapter 7 pp 240-243 for discussion of our author's understanding of the interceding Christ.
 52. For a discussion of this issue see below, Chapter 3, pp 84-87; Chapter 5 pp 163-67.
 53. A.J.B. Higgins, *The Priestly Messiah*, p 236.
 54. *Ibid.*
 55. *Ibid.*
 56. Barrett, *Commentary*, p 103.
 57. Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p 89.
 58. H.W. Montefiore, p 95-6, suggests that our author may have been influenced by traditions reflected in the Gospels (e.g. that Jesus' death was a sacrifice; the sayings of Jesus that he would build a temple not made with hands; the messianic interpretation of Ps. 110:1 attributed to Jesus; and John 17).
 - 59 Cf. e.g. C.E.B. Cranfield, *Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary*, 1972 ed. p 342; R.H. Fuller, *The Mission and Achievement of Jesus*, London 1954 pp 56ff; W.J. Moulder, *The Old Testament Background and the Interpretation of Mark x.45*, NTS 24 (1977-8) pp 120-7, For a contrary view, see C.K. Barrett, *The Background of Mark x.45 in 'New Testament Essays'*, ed. A.J.B. Higgins, 1959 pp 1-18.
 - 60 For a survey of such views, see V. Taylor, *"The Gospel According to St. Mark"*, London 1966 (2nd ed.) p 445f.
 - 61 For examples of this usage in Judaism, see C.K. Barrett, *The Background of Mark x.45*, p 13. See also B. Lindars, *Jesus, Son of Man*, London 1983, pp 185ff, where he argues that "the underlying Aramaic expression is commonly used for 'to risk one's life'".
 - 62 This is the normal usage of the word in classical Greek and the LXX. See V. Taylor, p 444; C. K. Barrett, *art. cit.*, suggests an immediate background in the Maccabean martyrs whose lives constituted a ransom for Israel.
 - 63 Suggestions include a priestly figure; the angelic figure of Test. Dan. 6:2 (where the same phrase is used as in 1 Tim. 2:5) and a 'mediator' figure based on Job 9:32-3 (so A.T. Hanson, *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles*, London 1968).
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64. So T.W. Manson, JTS xlv, 1945, pp 1-10; C.K. Barrett, Commentary, p 78; F.F. Bruce, Commentary, p 106; W.D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism pp 237ff. Against this interpretation, see C.E.B. Cranfield I pp 214ff; L. Morris, The meaning of ἱλαστήριον in Rom. 3:25, NTS 2 (1955-6), pp 33-43.
65. Quoted in F.F. Bruce, op. cit., p 106.
66. Contra Cranfield and Morris as cited above. Cranfield translates the meaning of the verse as "God purposed Christ as a propitiatory victim" (I, p 217).
67. J.L. Houlden, art. cit., p 83.
68. L.S. Thornton, The Doctrine of the Atonement, London 1937, p 107
69. Cranfield (II pp 754ff.) argues that here Paul is thinking of the rôle of the Levite, subordinate to and assisting the rôle of Christ the priest.
70. Peterson, Perfection, p 63.
71. See, e.g. W. Zimmerli & J. Jeremias, The Servant of God, London 1957.
72. J.R. Schaefer, The Relationship between Priestly and Servant Messianism in the Epistle to the Hebrews, CBQ 30 (1968), pp 359-85, at p. 382.
73. Montefiore, p 162.
74. Moffatt, p 134.
75. V. Taylor, The Atonement in New Testament Teaching, London 1940, p 150.
76. A. Richardson, Theology of the NT, p 222.
77. Peterson, Perfection, p 138.
78. Ibid., p 94, 138 (see especially n. 38).
79. Buchanan, p 98.
80. A. Snell, New and Living Way, London 1959.
81. L.S. Thornton, The Dominion of Christ, Westminster 1952, p 79.
82. F.F. Bruce, p 159.
83. Ibid. p 205.
84. Cullmann, Christology, p 91.
85. For a discussion of Jewish interpretation of the Isaianic Servant see, e.g. W. Zimmerli & J. Jeremias, The Servant of God, Chap. III, pp 43-78. See also N. Hillyer, The Servant of God, EQ 41, 1969, pp 143-60 (supporting a connection between the suffering servant theme and the Aqedah); cf. Vermes, art. cit. in Chapter 2 n. 164.
86. M. Hengel, Son of God, p 88.
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87. For a discussion of this possibility, see R.P. Martin, *Carmen Christi*, Cambridge 1967, pp 182-90. Martin sees Christ's rôle in this passage as one that blends together "the picture of the obedient last Adam and the suffering servant" (p 196).
88. Peterson, p 223, n. 95.
89. See especially Chapter 4, pp 112-14 and Chapter 7, pp 228-31.
90. G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, London 1953, p 48. He reads,
 "who (τὸς) is the man whom thou mindest?
 Truly the Son of Man, for him thou visitest."
 Against this reading, see R.V.G. Tasker, *The Text of the Corpus Paulinum*, NTS Vol I (1954-5) p 185. He argues that our author would not "have played havoc with the parallelism of the Psalmist in this way in the interests of a Son of Man Christology".
91. Cullmann, *Christology*, p 188.
92. J. Hering, *Commentary*, p 15.
93. J.A.T. Robinson, *The Human Face of God*, p 78, n. 45: "It is also possible that He.2:6-7 may contain the sole echo in the epistles of the memory of Jesus as 'the Son of Man'.
94. A.J.B. Higgins, *Jesus and the Son of Man*, London 1964, p 146. See also his articles, *The Old Testament and some aspects of NT Christology* cited in n. 37 above, pp 128-41 and *The Priestly Messiah*, NTS 13, 1966-7, p 236
95. S. Kistermaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Amsterdam 1961, p 29. See also his commentary, Welwyn England, 1984, pp 65f.
96. O. Michel, *Commentary*, pp 70-1.
97. Buchanan, pp 27, 39-51.
98. P. Giles, *The Son of Man in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Exp. T. Vol 86 (1974-5), pp 328-31.
99. See above p 78.
100. P. Giles, op. cit., p 331.
101. See, e.g. Wm. Neil, *Hebrews*, London 1955, p 39; T. Hewitt, *Hebrews*, London 1960, p 66ff.; V. Taylor, *Atonement in New Testament Teaching*, London 1963, p 110; A. Richardson, *Theology*, p 139.
102. M. Casey, *Son of Man*, p 155.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

- 104 B. Lindars, *Jesus Son of Man*, London 1983, p 8. Others who see no titular usage here include Moffatt and Montefiore.
- 105 Notable here is F.H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, London 1967, p 237. For further discussion on this point, see below, Chapter 5 p 166f.
106. For a range of views on this issues see e.g.
M.D. Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark*, London 1967
G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, London 1973
A.J.B. Higgins, *The Son of Man in the Teaching of Jesus*, Cambridge 1980
J. Bowker, *The Son of Man*, JTS 28, 1977, pp 19-48
M. Casey, *Son of Man: the Interpretation and Influence of Daniel 7*, London 1979
B. Lindars, *Jesus Son of Man*, London 1983
C.C. Caragounis, *The Son of Man - Vision and Interpretation*, WUNT 38, Tübingen 1986
- 107 See above pp 67-9.
- 108 See above pp 79.
- 109 See above p 78.
- 110 M. Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark*, p 198. In *Continuity and Discontinuity, Early Christianity in its Jewish Setting*, London 1986, p 50, Prof. Hooker warns against an exclusively "titular" approach to Christology, suggesting that some Christological terms (e.g. the Son of Man) "became titles through being applied to Jesus". She goes on to say, "Just as the term 'Messiah' was defined through the experience men and women had of Jesus, so the phrase 'the Son of Man' took on a new meaning through the same experience".
- 111 See above pp 82-4.
- 112 So, e.g. M. Casey and B. Lindars, cited in n. 106.
- 113 Peterson, p 63.
- 114 J.D.G. Dunn, *Christology*, p 208.
- 115 See Chapter 4, pp 105-6; Chapter 5 pp 163-7; Chapter 7 pp 225-7.
- 116 cf. Hengel, *The Son of God*, p 66.
- 117 Ibid. p 66.
- 118 Ibid. p 63.

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- 119 See further Chapter 4 pp 101-23 for discussion of our author's opening sentence.
- 120 See further pp 101-23 below.
- 121 See further Chapter 7, pp 214-46.
- 122 B. Lindars, NT Apologetic, p 51.
- 123 Peterson, p 52.
- 124 Loader, op. cit., p 212.
- 125 Ibid. p 205.
- 126 Ibid. p 206.
- 127 Ibid, p 206.
- 128 Ibid. p 206; cf. W. Manson, Epistle to the Hebrews, p 54, who suggests that Ps. 110:4 belonged to a primitive confession.
- 129 On the worship of Jesus in Rev., see R.J. Bauckham, The Worship of Jesus in Apocalyptic Christianity, NTS 27, 1980-81, pp 322-41 (esp. pp 329-31). See also D.R. Carnegie, Worthy is the Lamb - the hymns in Revelation in 'Christ the Lord', ed. H.H. Rowdon, Leicester 1982, pp 243-56.
- 130 so, e.g., Bowman, Hewitt, Montefiore, Michel.
- 131 See V.H. Neufeld, The Earliest Christian Confessions, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1963; also O. Cullmann, Early Christian Worship, London 1953, p 22f (confession formulae recited in early Christian worship services); P.F. Bradshaw, Daily Prayer in the Early Church, London 1981, p 31
 (ὁμολογία as a form of prayer which attributed Christological titles to Jesus);
 On ὁμολογία in Hebrews, see, e.g. E. Käsemann, Gottesvolk pp 105-110 (he takes it as a reference to the early Christian community liturgy); G. Bornkamm Das Bekenntnis im Hebräerbrief, Theologische Blätter, 1942, pp 56-66 (the 'confessions' mentioned in Hebrews are to be connected with a hymn found at 1:3 and used in eucharistic worship); D. Peterson, pp 75f (endorses Westcott's view that ὁμολογία involved "a clear declaration of belief openly in the face of men").
- 132 Neufeld, p 135. We might note also Acts 9:20. See further Dunn, Christology p 52.
- 133 Neufeld, p 140f.
- 134 V. Taylor, The Names of Jesus, London 1953, p 8.
- 135 Ibid. p 7.
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- 136 Heb. 2:9; 3:1; 4:14; 6:20; 7:22; 10:19; 12:2, 24; 134:12. See also 10:10; 13:8, 21 (Jesus Christ) and 13:20 (our Lord Jesus).
- 137 cf. M. Hengel, *Son of God*, p.88: "One might almost regard the whole of Hebrews as a large-scale development of the christological theme which is already present in the Philipians hymn". Compare Käsemann, *Gottesvolk*, p 63 and R.P. Martin, *Carmen Christi*, p 305 n.8, who sees the similarities in terms of a 'Heavenly Man' myth of redemption.
- 138 Cf. e.g. Westcott *ad loc.*, J.A.T. Robinson, *The One Baptism in 'Twelve NT Studies*, p 171f; P.E. Hughes, p 412.
- 139 R.T. France, *The Worship of Jesus*, in 'Christ the Lord', ed. H.H. Rowdon, Leicester 1982, pp 17-36, at p 30.
- 140 Martin, *op. cit.*, p 251f.
- 141 Neufeld, *op. cit.*, p 42ff.
- 142 See below, especially pp 247-9. See Cullmann, *Worship*, p 23: all confessions stress "the present Lordship of Christ". We may note the view expressed by, e.g., E. Schweizer and R.P. Martin that Mark's Gospel may have been written to counteract an unbalanced triumphalist emphasis (see R.P. Martin, *Mark, Evangelist and Theologian*, Exeter 1972, pp 156-62). If both Gospel and Epistle were written for a Christian community in Rome, we may have here an interesting 'linkage'.
- 143 As P.E. Hughes (p. 126) puts it, the verb implies giving "one's mind diligently to something". The verb is used again at 10:24 ("let us consider how to stir one another up to love and good works").
- 144 Arndt-Gingrich use this phrase to describe the contemplative spiritual sense of $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\nu\omicron\epsilon\lambda\omega$; cf. Acts 7:31, 32.
- 145 Interestingly, at 2:9 and 12:2, we find sandwiched between the definite article and its noun ('Jesus'), material which further defines the significance of Jesus. Elsewhere in Hebrews, Jesus is not used with the definite article.

- 146 So, e.g. Moffatt and those mentioned in n. 130 above.
- 147 So, e.g. Westcott and P.E. Hughes *ad loc.* See also Chapter 4 n.2.
- 148 For other allusions see Matt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20; Rom. 11:25-28; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3; 1 Pet. 1:2.
- 149 Snell, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
- 150 See above pp 50-2.
- 151 Matt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20. For a discussion of sacrificial imagery in the Last Supper narratives, see D. Moo, *The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives*, Sheffield 1983, pp 301-11.
- 152 Moffatt, p xlvi.
- 153 Liturgical language permeates the Epistle. See further Chapter 7 p 247.
- 154 Wainwright, *Doxology*, London 1980 p 48

- 1 cf e.g. Montefiore, p 67; Buchanan, p 38.
- 2 Westcott, p 56. cf. Arndt-Gingrich: "from where, whence, from which... at the beginning of a clause therefore, hence."
The word is also used in Heb. at 3:1; 7:25; 8:3; 9:18; 11:19.
- 3 A.C. Purdy, Interpreter's Bible, p 578.
- 4 P. Giles, The Son of Man in the Epistle to the Hebrews, p 328
- 5 For discussion of the textual issue in this phrase, see below Chapter 6, pp 181-4.
- 6 cf. Montefiore, p 6. The author's theology is "theocentric... for our author, it is the work of God throughout that is most important".
- 7 Spicq vol I p 33.
- 8 Thornton, The Incarnate Lord, London 1928, p 296. We might perhaps query his qualification that the prologue of Hebrews is "almost as deliberately worded as that of the fourth gospel".
- 9 On Qumran's expectation of an eschatological prophet, see Vermes, Perspective, p 185; M. A. Knibb, Qumran Community, p 139f.
- 10 R.N. Longenecker, The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity, London 1970, p 37.
- 11 Moffatt, p liii.
- 12 Matthew and Luke have the son and heir being killed outside the city, cf. Heb. 13:12 which states that Jesus suffered "outside the gate".
- 13 See above, pp 90-91.
- 14 On the use of Ps. 110:1 in the NT, see D.M. Hay, op. cit.; W.R.G. Loader, op. cit. pp 199-217.
- 15 Westcott, p 70.
- 16 For a discussion of the possibility of such a connection in the fourth Gospel, see above pp 69-70.
- 17 Moffatt, p 33.
- 18 W.D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p 43.
- 19 See below, Chapter 5 pp 163-5; Chapter 7 225-7.
- 20 CD.III.20; 1QS IV.23a; 1QH XVII.15.
- 21 Philo, Special Laws, iv.123.
- 22 See W.D. Davies, op.cit. p 43.

- 23 2 Cor. 3:18, see the discussion in C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, London 1973, p 124f; On Rev. 1:16, see G.B. Caird. *Commentary ad loc.*
- 24 Leg. All. I.61; Sac. 60; Det. 77; Conf.102; Heres 38, 181, 294; Plant.18. cf. 1 Clement 33:4.
- 25 See above pp 54-5.
- 26 See M.D. Johnson's discussion of this document in R.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, vol II, pp 249-57. He concludes that the 'Vita' was produced sometime during the first century AD and notes some interesting parallels with the Pauline writings.
- 27 Snell, p 41. See also Dunn, *Christology*, p 207, where he rearranges the lines of the Colossians passage to make a comparison with Hebrews.
- 28 Hengel, *Son of God*, p 67.
- 29 Dunn, *Christology*, p 206 [my brackets].
- 30 See above, p 105f.
- 31 Dunn, *Christology* p 209.
- 32 Dunn, *Christology*, p 210. cf. J. Sawyer, *Biblical Alternatives to Monotheism*, *Theology*, May 1984 and R.E. Clements' reply in *Monotheism and the Canonical Process*, *Theology*, Sep. 1984.
- 33 S. Sandmel, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings*, Oxford 1978, p 298.
- 34 Among those who see theological reflection as important in the use and interpretation of wisdom language are B. L. Mack, *Wisdom, Myth and Mythology*, *Interpretation*, xxiv no.1, Jan. 1970; E.S. Fiorenza, *Wisdom, Mythology and the Christological Hymns of the New Testament* in R. Wilkins (ed.) *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity*, Univ. of Notre Dame 1975. Also Dunn, *Christology*, e.g. pp 262f.
- 35 On this interesting and disputed possibility, see e.g. E.S. Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, London 1983 pp 130-4; R. Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, London 1983, p 56f and compare Dunn, *Christology*, p 265.
For a more cautious view, see M. Hayter, *The New Eve in Christ*, London 1987, pp 22-24.
- 36 cf, e.g. Prov. 8:1-31; Wisdom 7:24-8:4; Ecclus. 1:1-19.
- 37 W. Gray, *Wisdom Christology in the New Testament: its Scope and Relevance*, *Theology*, Nov. 1986 pp 448-59. On "root-metaphor" see p 450.

- 38 J.H. Balchin, Paul, Wisdom and Christ, in 'Christ the Lord' pp 204-219 at p 207.
- 39 See, e.g. St. John of the Cross, Poems, and the many 'devotional' hymns addressed directly to Jesus.
- 40 D. Daiches, God and the Poets, Oxford 1984.
- 41 Ibid. p 219.
- 42 Ibid. p 209.
- 43 Ideal or personal? For a discussion of this issue in relation to Hebrews, see below pp. 109-112.
- 44 As Balchin puts it, "there was nothing abstract about the Lord Jesus Christ", art. cit. p 212.
- 45 E.S. Fiorenza, art. cit. p 34.
- 46 See below, p 113.
- 47 Hengel, Son of God, pp 63ff.
- 48 Ibid. p 66.
- 49 See above pp 88-9.
- 50 Westcott, p 7. See also, e.g. Farrar, Moffatt, Guthrie *ad loc.*
- 51 See above pp 103f.
- 52 See e.g. V. Taylor, Mark, (2nd ed.) 1966, p 472f; E. Schweizer, The Good News according to Mark, London 1971, p 239f.
- 53 See below, pp 130-4.
- 54 See below, pp 137-8.
- 55 Pace e.g. Dunn, Christology p 212; J.A.T. Robinson, The Human Face of God, pp 155-61.
- 56 see below pp 125-9.
- 57 So C.J. Vaughan, The Epistle to the Hebrews, London 1890, *ad loc.*
- 58 Moffatt, p 9.
- 59 Snell, p 41.
- 60 P.E. Hughes, p 180.
- 61 Lohmeyer, Kyrios Jesus, Eine Untersuchung zu Phil. 2.^{us}-11, Heidleberg (2nd ed.) 1961, p 77f.
- 62 In some MSS we find $\delta\epsilon\ \epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ or $\delta\epsilon\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ added to the phrase. See Moffatt, p 8; B.M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, London/New York 1975, p 662.
- 63 See above p 107f.
- 64 Spicq II p 10.
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- 65 Ibid.
 - 66 J.T. Sanders, *The NT Christological Hymns: their historical and religious background*, Cambridge 1971.
 - 67 Ibid. p 19.
 - 68 C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, London 1982, p 112.
 - 69 e.g. R.W. Longenecker, J. Daniélou, O. Michel.
 - 70 R. W. Longenecker, *Christology*, p 31.
 - 71 See above pp 17-19.
 - 72 Longenecker, *op. cit.*, p 29.
 - 73 G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, vol. I, Cambridge, Mass. 1927, p 411.
 - 74 E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, London 1977, pp 212-33.
 - 75 cf., e.g. Gen. 21:17; 22:11, 12, 15-18; Ex. 3:2; Num. 22:31ff; Judges 6:20ff; 13:9-21 etc. As Sandmel (*Judaism and Christian Beginnings*, p 171) crisply puts it, "they did God's errands".
 - 76 De Conf. Ling. 146.
 - 77 cf. Sandmel, *op. cit.* p 172.
 - 78 See above pp 20-25. See also G. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, p 18f and Rowland *op. cit.* pp 88ff.
 - 79 War II.8.7.
 - 80 See G. Vermes, *Qumran in Perspective*, London 1977 pp 116-30. cf. also M.A. Knibb, *The Qumran Community*, Cambridge 1987, p 4.
 - 81 cf. e.g. Tertullian, *De Carn. Christi* 14; Epiphanius, *Haer.* xxx.16.4; Clementine Homilies 18.4; Shepherd of Hermas, e.g. Com. V 1-7 (amongst a number of references to Christ as an angel); Justin, *Dial.* 126.1-2.
 - 82 cf. Longenecker, *op. cit.*, p 31.
 - 83 For a recent discussion of possibilities see F.F. Bruce, *Commentary on Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians*, Grand Rapids 1984, pp 17-26.
 - 84 Angels are sometimes depicted as agents of evil - so Matt. 25:41 (the devil and all his angels); 2 Pet. 2:4 (angels that sinned); Jude 6 (wayward angels).
 - 85 A.S. Peake, *Commentary* p 79.
 - 86 Where the LXX has πῦρ φλέγον, our author writes πῦρ φλόγα. cf. other places where angels are associated with elements of wind and fire, e.g. Ex. 3:2; Judges 13:10; 2K6:17; 4 Ezra 8:21f.
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- 87 So Spicq II *ad loc.*.
- 88 See Vaughan, *op. cit.* p 9 where he comments on angels and other topics being introduced allusively by a participial clause.
- 89 Thus our author rules out a carrying over to the 'new *οἰκουμένη* ' of the notion that angels have a part in governing the world.
- 90 D.M. Hay, *op. cit.*, p 153.
- 91 For this sense of superiority in power, see Delitzsch vol I p 58.
- 92 So Farrar, p 59.
- 93 Gen. 32:28 (see G. von Rad, *Genesis*, ET London 1963 (2nd ed.) p 316f).
- 94 cf. e.g. Ex. 3:13-15 and see R.E. Clement, *Exodus*, Cambridge 1972, p 23.
- 95 cf. e.g. Gen. 2:19 and von Rad's comment (*Genesis*, London , p 81) "name-giving in the ancient Orient was primarily an exercise of sovereignty".
- 96 Farrar p 58.
- 97 This construction is exclusive to Hebrews in the NT. 'Better' is a favourite word of our author, used 13 times in Heb, as against 7 times in the rest of the NT.
- 98 e.g. Spicq and P.E. Hughes would follow Chrysostom, Theodoret et al in this interpretation.
- 99 Schlatter, *The Church in the New Testament Period*, London 1955, p 296.
- 100 A.W. Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament*, London 1962, p 102.
- 101 see below, pp 181-4.
- 102 Ascribed to Thomas à Kempis (see *Hymns Ancient and Modern Revised* 1951 187 v 2 line 1).
- 103 References to angels at 12:22 and 13:2 do not contrast them directly with the Son.
- 104 Hengel, *Son of God*, p 57.
- 105 As the Epistle progresses, we see that God also speaks directly to Abraham (6:14), Moses (8:5) and believers (12:5, 6; 13:5).
- 106 So E. Käsemann, *Gottesvolk*, who connects the ceremony with a posited Heavenly man redeemer myth. Cf. also G.J. Brooke, *op. cit.*, p 209, who suggests a liturgical setting for Heb. 1:5, akin to the Qumran Covenanters celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. See further below, p 257f.
- 107 Deut. 32:43; Ps. 104:4; Ps. 45:6, 7; Ps. 102:25-27.

- 108 There is the possibility that Luke 3:22 contains the phrase "today I have begotten you". See I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, Exeter 1978, p 154f for discussion.
- 109 See P.E. Hughes, p 53.
- 110 Our author uses $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ 12 times. Only on the three occasions cited is it at all likely that he was using it in a titular sense.
- 111 See above p 110f.
- 112 See above p 110f.
- 113 The writers concerned in these examples may not themselves have subscribed to the views outlined but the way in which they have expressed themselves may point to the existence of such 'popular' views.
- 114 See above pp 115-21.
- 115 See Moffatt, p 12. He cites rabbinic material which reflects a belief that God creates angels daily.
- 116 ὑποστάντης = substantial nature, essence, actual being, reality (often in contrast to what merely seems to be...) So Arndt-Gingrich p 854, who then translate the phrase in Heb. 1:3 as "a(n exact) representation of his (=God's) real being". So e.g. Westcott, Spicq, P.E. Hughes.
- 117 See below, pp 127ff.
- 118 Spicq II *ad loc* prefers a Chronicles reference.
- 119 *Contra* Moffatt, p 10.
- 120 See M.A. Knibb comment on 4QFlor. in *The Qumran Community*, pp 257-62. We may note also that G.J. Brooke, in his study of 4QFlor., where 2 Sam. 7:10-14 and Ps. 2:1, 2 are considered side by side, posits a liturgical setting (an enthronement ceremony at the Feast of Tabernacles) and suggests that Acts 13:33-37 and Heb.1:5 may have a similar liturgical starting-point.
- 121 The nearest he comes to it elsewhere in the Epistle is at 7:14 ("our Lord was descended from Judah").
- 122 Moffatt p 10. He cites Philo, *Leg. Alleg.* 111.9.
- 123 Moulton-Turner, p 112.
- 124 a) Human birth of the Son: the action of God's bringing about the incarnation precedes his command that the angels worship, a command given once the human birth was effected.

- b) Resurrection/exaltation: again, God's action in raising/exalting his Son is completed before the summons to angelic worship.
- c) Parousia: the same chronological sequence is postulated for an event yet to occur.
- 125 On οἰκουμένη see G. Johnston, ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΗ and ΚΟΣΜΟΣ in the New Testament, NTS 10 (1963-4), pp 353-4.
See also N. Turner, Christian Words, pp 501f.
cf. A. Vanhoye who says οἰκουμένη "evokes a spiritual reality - the world of relationships among persons", L'oikoumené dans l'épître aux Hébreux, Biblica 45 (1964) pp 248-53.
- 126 See I.H. Marshall, Luke, p 98; F.F. Bruce, Acts, p 239.
- 127 cf. e.g. Epictetus iv.1.104; pseudo-Musonius ep.90. Is there an allusion here to the image found occasionally in the OT of God as a woman giving birth? So (by implication) Num. 11:12; Deut. 32:18; Is. 42:14; cf. Is. 49:15. Deut. 32:18 may be of particular significance in view of our author's very probable reference to Deut. 32:43 at Heb. 1:6. Indeed, chapter 32 of Deut. includes a number of strongly "maternal" pictures (cf., e.g. v. 11, the brooding and yearning eagle; vv 13, 18, the God who feeds his (her?) children.) As God bore Israel of old, so he brings into the new age that firstborn son who represents redeemed humanity, the new people of God.
- 128 1 Clem. xxxviii.3.
- 129 cf. Is. 42:14. The image of a woman in the pangs of childbirth is not infrequently used in the OT to signify both judgement (cf. e.g. 2 Kings 19:3//Is. 37:3 - failure in the delivery of a child; Jer. 4:31; 6:24; 13:20-21; 30:5b-6; Mic. 4:10) and hope (Is. 66:7; Jer. 31:8, LXX 38:8; Mic. 5:3).
The image is taken up in the NT mainly in its 'hopeful' sense, cf. Jn. 16:21-22 (travail followed by joy that a human being is "born into the world" - ἐγεννήθη ἄνθρωπος εἰς τὸν κόσμον ; Mk. 13:8 (the birth-pangs of the new age); Rev. 12 (the birth of the Messiah - does it refer to the travail of death, followed by resurrection? So G.B. Caird, Commentary, p 149f, who sees it as an interpretation of Ps. 2).
cf. 1QH III.6-18 which graphically describes the tribulations that will accompany the coming of the Messiah in terms of labour-pains. On this

- whole area, see F. Young, *Can these Dry Bones Live?*, London 1982, pp 43-63.
- 130 Has our author changed the LXX ὁ ω to ἀγγελος or had the change already been made? If the former, it underlines his concern to stress the difference in the character of relationship with God enjoyed by the Son and the angels.
- 131 See previous note and LXX Gen. 6:3, 5; Ps. 88:6.
- 132 cf. Exod. R. 37b, 13:1, 19:7, commenting on Ps. 89:27.
- 133 See above p 106.
- 134 cf. W. Turner, *Christian Words* p 501, who talks of the context of 'enthronement and sees in 1:6 reference to "the inauguration of the future dispensation".
- 135 See e.g. Matt. 25:31; Mk. 8:38; 13:27; 2 Thess. 1:7.
- 136 See p 117.
- 137 cf. Philo, *Virt.* 74; 1 *Chm.* 36.3, where λειτουργος is used of heavenly beings as servants of God.
- 138 cf. e.g. Ex. 28:31, 39; 29:30-30:20; 35:18; 36:34.
- 139 See J.H. Moulton, *A Grammar of NT Greek*, vol III, (W. Turner), Edinburgh 1963, p 34. Turner feels that "in Heb. 1:8 it is only just conceivable that ὁ Θεός is nominative".
ὁ Θεός is undoubtedly a vocative in 10:7, where the quotation from Ps. 40 clearly refers to Yahweh. Here Christ addresses God in the same way as in chap. 1 God addresses Christ
- 140 Those who prefer the reading "God is thy throne" include Westcott, Vickham, Moffatt.
Those who take ὁ Θεός as a vocative include Delitzsch, Hering, Spicq, F.F. Bruce, P.E. Hughes, Kistemaker.
- 141 Buchanan, p 20f.
- 142 Buchanan, p 20
- 143 So p46 B.
- 144 A Vanhoye, *La structure littéraire de l'épître aux Hébreux*, 2nd ed. Paris-Bruges 1976, p 71, feels that ὁ Θεός is a description highlighted by the device of inclusio, in the same way as 'Son' at v 5.
- 145 So Vanhoye, op cit.
- 146 See above, pp 107-12.

- 147 C.F.D. Moule, *The Influence of Circumstances in the use of Christological Terms* in 'Essays in NT Interpretation', Cambridge 1982, pp 166, 168.
- 148 See below pp 159-62.
- 149 Moule, *op. cit.*, p 169.
See below p 137f.
- 150 For *κῦριος* the references are numerous.
For 'shepherd' see e.g. Ps. 23:1; 80:1; Ezek 34:11ff. Ps. 23:1 (22:1 LXX), of course, combines the two images.
- 151 It is a tension which, of course, persists to this day, highlighted presently, perhaps, by the impact of the "renewal movement" within and outside the "mainstream" churches.
- 152 See above pp 107-9.
- 153 cf. F.F. Bruce, p 19. He argues, "This is not the only place in the OT where a king, especially of the Davidic line, is addressed in language which could only be described as the characteristic hyperbole of oriental court style if interpreted solely of the individual so addressed. But to Hebrew poets and prophets a prince of the house of David was the vicegerent of Israel's God..." He cites Is. 9:6.
See also Vanhoye, *Situations*, pp 176f.
- 154 Héring, p 26.
- 155 F.F. Bruce, p 20f.
- 156 Vanhoye, p 193. P.E. Hughes (p 66), following Teodorico, "advises that we should not seek to impose on the term "comrades" in the quotation a too precise value." Its purpose is simply to stress the supremacy of the Son.
- 157 L.C. Allen, Psalm 45:7-8 (6-7) in *Old and New Testament Settings*, in 'Christ the Lord' ed. H. H. Rowdon, Leicester 1982, pp 220-42.
- 158 Allen, *op. cit.*, p 238f. cf. Dunn, *Christology* p 55.
- 159 Allen, *op. cit.*, p 283.
- 160 So, for example, we might describe the Prologue. Our author's hortatory passages are, of course, rather more direct.
- 161 Allen, *op. cit.* p 233, points to the messianic interpretation of the psalm in Jewish literature and concludes that messianic usage "seems to be attested sufficiently widely for a Jewish background to be postulated behind the Christological application in Heb. 1:8-9".
- 162 Luke 4:18-19.
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- 163 We may note other NT passages on the same theme, e.g. Acts 2:34-36; 4:26-27.
- 164 Spicq II p 19.
- 165 Vanhoye, Situation, pp 187ff.
- 166 Acts 2:22-36; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Pet. 3:18-22.
Here were attempts to reflect theologically on what was perceived to be an historical order of events.
- 167 See above p 112-14.
- 168 Vanhoye, Situation, p 187f., discerns this pattern at 2:9; 4:7-10; 7:27-8:1; 10-12. Of these, we shall focus particularly on 2:9 (below pp 174ff.).
- 169 Spicq II p 19.
- 170 Westcott, p 27.
- 171 So P.E. Hughes (p 65), who speaks for many commentators: "the anointing 'with the oil of gladness' refers... to the triumphant entry of Jesus into the heavenly glory".
- 172 cf. Westcott, p 28: "The conjunction carries with it the λέγει πρὸς τοὺς υἱοὺς of vv 8, 9".
- 173 See, e.g. W. Foerster & G. Quell, Lord, from Kittel TWNT, London ET 1958. D. Guthrie, New Testament Theology, Leicester 1981, pp 291-301, with bibliographical notes.
- 174 Moule, art. cit. p 169. He points particularly to Paul's use of Is. 45:23 at Rom. 14:11 and Phil. 2:10-11.
- 175 Certain scholars, notably Buchanan, would be reluctant to come to this conclusion. Buchanan does not see vv 10ff as meaning that Jesus was believed to be God. At most, it means that Jesus was thought of as "a sort of demiurge" (p 22).
Note also T.F. Glasson's article, Plurality of Divine Persons and the Quotations in Heb. 1:6ff, NTS 12, pp 270-2. He sees the quotation from Ps. 102 as a dialogue between the Father and the Son. Glasson also points out that texts like Deut. 32:43; Ps. 45:6-7 and Ps. 110:1 were used in patristic writings to support the argument for plurality in God.
- 176 D.M. Hay, op. cit., p 160.
- 177 The adjective λειτουργικός occurs only here in the NT. cf. Philo, Virt.74.
- 178 cf. e.g. Gen. 19:15; Pss. 34:7; 91:11.
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- 1 See, e.g. C.H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, London (new ed.) 1944.
- 2 Paul, of course, points graphically to this situation in 1 Cor. 1:20-25.
- 3 C.D.F. Moule, art. cit. p 168.
- 4 V. Taylor, *Atonement in NT Teaching*, p 115.
- 5 παραρῶμεν. The literal meaning of the verb is 'flow past'. It also carries the sense of slip away, be washed away, drift away (A.G p 627). Chrysostom felt that our author had Prov. 3:21 in mind here.
- 6 Note how deeply Hebrews seems to be influenced by the Deuteronomic tradition. The author quotes or alludes to at least 16 passages, i.e. Deut. 4:11, 24, 31, 36; 5:23; 8:5; 9:3, 19; 17:6; 18:19; 26:12; 29:18; 31:6-8; 32:35, 36, 43.
See also above p 45, p 145 and nn. 28 & 29 below.
- 7 Note how our author, good pastor and teacher that he is, includes *himself* in the exhortations and warnings he delivers.
- 8 cf. Gal. 3:19 for the tradition of angelic mediation in the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai.
- 9 Characteristic a *minori ad maius* argument beloved of our author.
cf. the rabbinic interpretative principle of Qal wahomer. Spicq, vol. I, p 53 adduces parallels from Philo. Compare also Rom. 11:21-24.
- 10 See discussion on pp 114-21 above.
- 11 Montefiore, p 51.
- 12 See above, n. 6 . προσέχειν is used 14 times in the LXX^{of Deuteronomy}, very largely in the sense of taking heed in the context of obedience.
- 13 He uses it 7 times in all, more than in any other NT writing, i.e. at 1:14; 2:3, 10; 5:9; 6:9; 9:28; 11:7. It is interesting, perhaps, that he does not use εὐαγγέλιον
- 14 Buchanan puts forward the theory that the author and his community were looking forward to an earthly promised land (see p 23 above).
- 15 *Contra*, e.g. A.S. Peake, p 94.
If Mk. 2:2 and 4:33 be quoted, it must be borne in mind that there Jesus is speaking τοῦ λόγου, whereas in Heb. 2:3, God is the clearly implied subject and full salvation is clearly the subject matter.
- 16 Moffatt, p 19.

- 17 For God speaking $\delta\epsilon\iota$, cf. e.g. Lk. 1:70. Note the absence of one popular usage of $\lambda\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ meaning 'to chatter' or 'gossip' (the meaning to be understood in 1 Cor. 14:34 ?).
- 18 1:1, 2; 2:2, 3,5; 3:5; 4:8; 5:5; 6:9; 7:14; 9:19; 11:4, 18; 12:24, 25; 13:7.
- 19 Heb. 1:1, 2; 2:2, 3; 4:8, 5,5; 11:18, 12:25 (of divine speech).
- 20 See above, p 93 and p 137f.
- 21 So also with regard to the usage of $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ at 7:14 and 13:20.
- 22 At p 138 we identified a possible underlying link between the meaning given to $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ in 1:10 and the opening words of Ps. 110. cf. Christ's use of these words in the Synoptic tradition (e.g. Mk. 12:35-37) , and his comment "If David called him Lord... " (12:37).
- 23 On Jn. 1:1, see Barrett, p 151f.
On Mk. 1:1, see W.L. Lane, The Gospel of Mark, Grand Rapids 1974, p 42.
On Heb. 2:3, A. Vanhoye (Exegesis Epistulae ad Hebraeos, cap. I-II, p 43) wonders whether there could be an allusion here to Gen. 1:1. The word of Christ has generated the new creation.
- 24 There is arguably greater emphasis on the earthly ministry of Jesus than in any other epistle.
- 25 See discussion below on pp 189-91.
- 26 $\beta\epsilon\beta\alpha\iota\acute{\omega}$ has the meaning of confirm or validate (see A.G. p 138) cf. Mk. 16:20; Rom. 15:8; 1 Cor. 1:6, 8; 2 Cor 1:21; Col. 2:7, Heb.2:3; 13:9. Note how $\epsilon\beta\epsilon\beta\alpha\iota\acute{\omega}\theta\eta$ in 2:3 parallels the use of $\beta\acute{\epsilon}\beta\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma$ in 2:2.
- 27 cf. Gal. 3:2, 5 which makes explicit this sense of $\lambda\kappa\omicron\upsilon\omega$
- 28 cf. especially Deut. 4:11, 24, 31, 36 to which our author seems particularly drawn.
- 29 cf. e.g. A.D.H. Mayes, Deuteronomy, London 1979, p 57f.
- 30 In chapter 9, our author makes use of the double meaning of $\delta\iota\alpha\theta\acute{\eta}\kappa\eta$ i.e. covenant and will, Covenant in the OT sense, one might say, 'benefited' the Israelites far more than God.
- 31 cf. e.g. Deut. 17:6; 19:15. Compare also the stress in John on God bearing witness to Jesus along with his works, see, e.g. Jn. 8:17f; 10:25.
- 32 Acts 2:19, 22, 43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 7:36; 14:3; 15:12.
- 33 Matt. 24:24; Mk. 13:22; Jn. 4:48; Rom. 15:19; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4.
- 34 Matt. 24:24; Mk. 13:22; Jn. 4:48.
- 35 J.D.G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament, London 1977, p 181.

36. It is not clear why Dunn includes 2 Cor. 12:12 in his list of negative references. Paul seems to be saying here that signs and wonders are the marks of a true apostle. cf. C.K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, London 1973, p 320ff.
 - 37 Ex. 7:3; 7:9; 11:9, 10; Deut. 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 11:3; 26:8; 29:3; Neh. 9:10; Ps. 77:43; Ps. 104:27; Ps. 134:9; Jer. 39:20, 21.
 - 38 Deut. 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 11:3; 26:8; 29:3; 34:11.
 - 39 See above pp 109-12 and 137-8.
 - 40 *δύναμις* appears in the synoptic gospels 38 times. In 29 of these instances it is associated directly or indirectly with the power of God (see, e.g. Matt. 26:64; Mk. 9:1; Lk. 5:17)
 - 41 See e.g. Heb. 10:30-31; 12:25-29.
 - 42 See further below pp 167-184.
 - 43 cf. e.g. Acts 2:19; 6:8; Rom. 15:19.
 - 44 cf. e.g. Montefiore, p 5: "Unlike Paul, our author has practically no theology of the Holy Spirit".
 - 45 1 Cor. 12-14. Montefiore feels that Hebrews was addressed to the Corinthian Church. Cf. Rom. 12:6ff.
 - 46 So, e.g. Delitzsch, Westcott, Moffatt, F.F. Bruce. Those who would disagree with this view include P.E. Hughes, Guthrie.
 - 47 cf. in LXX 2 Chron. 15:15; Prov. 8:35; Ezek. 18:23. See also Tob. 12:18; 2 Macc. 12:16 and 2 Clem. 116.
 - 48 A. Feuillet, *Le 'Commencement' de L'économie Chrétienne d'après He. II 3-4, Mc.1.1 et Ac.1.1-2*, NTS 24, pp 163-74.
 - 49 Our author certainly structures 2:1-4 very carefully. Note the use of "parallel words" in the first and second halves of the passage:

ἀκουσθεῖσιν // ἀκουσάντων
ὁ δι' ἀγγέλων λαλήθεις λόγος // σωτηρίας -- λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ κυρίου
βέβαιος // ἐβεβαιώθη

. See

further P. Auffret, *Note sur la structure littéraire d'HB II 1-4* NTS 25 (1979), p 177.
 - 50 See discussion on *οἰκουμένη* in Chapter 4 above, pp 126-29.
 - 51 cf. Deut. 32:8 LXX; Dan 10:20, 21; 12:1. P.E. Hughes (p 14) sees in Heb. 2:5 a specific point of reference in the belief of the Qumran community that the coming age would be subject to the archangel Michael.
 - 52 See below pp 186ff.
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- 53 cf. e.g. Heb. 10:32, 36; 11:26; 11:36-12:11.
- 54 On the former view, see T.W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus*, London 1949, p 216f; F.V. Filson, *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, London 2nd ed. 1971, p 211. On the latter view, see e.g. D. Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, London 1972, p 284.
- 55 See E. Schweizer, *The Good News according to Matthew*, London 1976, p 389.
- 56 On this passage, see below pp 163-65.
- 57 See below pp 163-67.
- 58 For a full discussion see I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, Exeter 1978, pp 814-18.
- 59 See further chapter 7, p 254f.
- 60 On the interpretation of these passages, see G.B. Caird, *Commentary*, pp 45ff; 58.
- 61 On this passage, see C.K. Barrett, *Commentary*, pp 94-98.
- 62 οἰκουμένη is used at Heb. 1:6; 2:5. κόσμος is used at Heb. 4:3; 9:26; 10:5; 11:7, 38. In each case the sense is the created earth.
- 63 H. Turner, *Christian Words*, p 501. See also literature cited in n.125 to Chapter 4 above, and the discussion at pp 126-28.
- 64 For a discussion of Hebrews' use of οἶκος, see Kistemaker, *Commentary*, p 84-88.
- 65 See M.A. Knibb, *op. cit.*, p 131.
4QFlor sets out the idea of the Covenanters as the Temple or house of God as in 2 Sam. 7:10-14, with its pun on the word 'house' - see Knibb, p 259ff. See also G.J. Brooke, *op. cit.*, p 178ff.
- 66 Compare his real concern that the Hebrews community should neglect to meet together (10:25).
- 67 F.F. Bruce, p 375.
- 68 See S-B vol III, pp 532, 573.
- 69 See the helpful summary discussion in Barrett, *Eschatology of Hebrews*, in 'The Background of the NT and its Eschatology', London 1956, pp 373ff.
See also B.C. Ollenburger, *Zion the City of the Great King - a Theological Symbol of the Jerusalem Cult*, JSOTS 41, Sheffield 1987.
- 70 cf Ezek. 40-47. Note the conviction of the Qumran community that they were the new Temple. See n. 65 above.
- 71 On Is. 11:8, see O. Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, ET London 1972, *ad loc.*
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- 72 On Is. 65:17 and 66:22, see R.N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, London 1975, *ad loc.*
- 73 See R.H. Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha I*, p 34 (1 En.); pp 932f (Test. Moses).
- 74 S. Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Amsterdam 1961, p 29.
- 75 H. Kee, *Community of the New Age*, p 72.
- 76 F.J. Maloney, *The Re-interpretation of Ps. viii and the Son of Man Debate*, NTS 27, 1980-1, p 660.
- 77 Ibid.
- 78 Note Hebrews' tendency in general to quote passages *in extenso*. cf. Heb. 1:8-9 (Ps. 45:6-7); 10-12 (Ps. 102: 25-27); 3:7-11 (Ps. 95:7-11); 8:8-12 (Jer. 31:31-34); 10:5-7 (Ps. 40:6-8).
- 79 Maloney *op. cit.*, p 658 .
- 80 See discussion and notes above in chapters 3 pp 89-91 and 4 pp 104-5.
- 81 See above pp 89-90.
- 82 Loader, *op. cit.*, p 212.
- 83 See, e.g. A.A. Anderson, *Psalms*, London 1972, pp 29-32; J.H. Eaton, *Psalms*, *London* 1967, pp 13-24. cf. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, p 48f, "There were for Israel perceptions which could be expressed, strangely to our ears, only in the form of the hymn".
- 84 Notably P.F. Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church*.
- 85 Bradshaw, *op. cit.*, p 43.
- 86 This Lukan summary surely reflects a genuine activity of the earliest Christians. See I.H. Marshall, *Acts*, Leicester 1980, p 85. cf. Jesus' comment that he was 'daily in the Temple' (Mk. 14:49). Paul visited the Temple when in Jerusalem (Acts 21:23-26).
- 87 cf. J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, London, ET 1969, p 208f; J.H. Eaton, *The Psalms come alive*, London 1984, p 4.
- 88 $\lambda\gamma\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma$ is used in the Psalms 18 times, compared with a total of 20 instances in the OT. Its related verb $\lambda\gamma\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{\omega}$ is used in the Psalms 51 times out of a total of 67 in the OT. (Note Luke's evident close acquaintance with the LXX.)
In the NT, $\lambda\gamma\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma$ is used 5 times (incl. Heb. 1:9); $\lambda\gamma\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{\omega}$ is used 11 times. See R. Bultmann, TDNT I, pp 19-21, where he argues the

essentially eschatological sense of the words as used by the early Church.

- 89 For a discussion of the confused Greek in this passage, see F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Leicester (2nd ed.) 1952, p 126f.
- 90 On the influence of the Christian 'dispersion', see e.g. M. Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul*, London, ET 1983, p 13, pp 110f; see also Wm. Manson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, London 1951, pp 37-41.
- 91 Most commentators would see at least an allusion to Ps. 2 here. See e.g. I.H. Marshall, *Luke*, p 155; D. Hill, *Matthew*, p 97f; W.L. Lane, *Mark*, p 57.
- 92 cf. E. Trocmé, *The Passion as Liturgy*, London 1983: "The *Sitz im Leben* of the original Passion Narrative thus was doubtless the liturgical commemoration of Christ's death by Christians during the Jewish Passover celebration" (p 82).
- 93 M. Hengel, *Hymns and Christology* in 'Between Jesus and Paul', p 91.
- 94 *Ibid.* p 91.
- 95 11Q Ps.^aDav.
See J.A. Sanders, *The Psalm Scroll of Qumran Cave 11*, DJ (DJ) IV, 1965, p 91f.
We might compare 1QH1.27b-31 where God is extolled as the creator of verse and music which can be used to bless God and recount his wonders. See Knibb, *op. cit.*, p 161. The Qumran community certainly employed psalms and hymns in their prayer and worship.
- 96 See, e.g. O. Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship*, ET London 1953, p 21f; R. P. Martin, *NT Hymns*, pp 37ff.
- 97 'Messianic psalms' such as 110 and 2. cf. Hengel, *Hymns*, p 93.
- 98 cf. e.g. Jn. 14:16-23; Matt. 18:20; 28:20 (Jesus with his followers); Rev. 1:10 - note the Spirit's involvement in the seer's insight into heaven. See D.R. Carnegie, *Worthy is the Lamb: the hymns in Revelation*, in 'Christ the Lord' p 198.
- 99 So, e.g. F.F. Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians*, pp 158-9; G.J. Cuming, *The New Testament Foundation for Common Prayer*, *Studia Liturgica* 10 (1974) p 98.
- 100 See, e.g. Hengel, *art. cit.*, p 90.

- 101 On 'worship songs' in Revelation, see Carnegie, art. cit., pp 243-56
- 102 Hengel, art. cit. He claims that this pattern was arrived at (and with the addition of elements like pre-existence and incarnation) by the mid-forties at the latest. See p 94f.
- 103 Ibid. p 95
- 104 Ibid. p 95
- 105 So, e.g. R.T. France, R.P. Martin, C.F.D. Moule, H.E.W. Turner, M. Wiles, A.W. Wainwright
- 106 cf. also the Qumran hymn quoted above. God "composes" verse and music so that people "may recount your wonders in all your deeds of truth" (n.95)
- 107 P.W. Collins, *More than meets the eye*, Ramsey, N.J. 1983, p 66
- 108 If one sees the character of the Epistle as a sermon or collection of sermons, this point is reinforced. See below pp 250-52
- 109 O. Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship*, p 24. There is certainly "much that is liturgical" in Hebrews
- 110 Cullmann, op. cit. p 25
- 111 Cullmann, *Christology*, p 188. See discussion in chapter 3 above, pp 84-7
- 112 A.J.B. Higgins, *Jesus and the Son of Man*, p 146
- 113 J. Héring, *Commentary*, p 15
- 114 P. Giles, art. cit. p 329
- 115 J.A.T. Robinson, *The Human Face of God*, p 78, n. 45
- 116 Those who would see Dan. 7 as the prime influence behind the title include C.C. Caragounis, op.cit., C.F.D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology*, Cambridge 1977, pp 25f
- 117 On the significance of Ezekiel, see e.g. A. Richardson, *Theology of the NT*, London 1958, pp 128f. On Ps. 80, see e.g. C.H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, pp 10f; E.M. Sidebottom, *The Christ of the Fourth Gospel*, London 1961, p 75
- 118 See e.g. Cullmann, *Christology*, pp 140f
- 119 C.F.D. Moule, *From Defendant to Judge - and Deliverer: An enquiry into the use and limitations of the theme of vindication in the NT*, Bulletin III of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas, 1952, p 41. cf. also J.A.T. Robinson, *The Human Face of God*, p 78 n. 5: "a title of humiliation leading to glory, as in Dan. 7:13-22"
- 120 Those who would dispute a titular interpretation include Vermes, Lindars
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- 121 J. Bowker, *The Religious Imagination and the Sense of God*, p 156
- 122 Ibid.
- 123 Ibid.
- 124 Ibid.
- 125 M.D. Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark*, p 72
- 126 Ibid. [*italics mine*]
- 127 Ibid. p 71f
- 128 Peterson, *Perfection* p 52 [*brackets mine*]
- 130 Dunn, *Christology* p 208
- 131 P. Giles, art. cit. p 330
- 132 cf. P.E. Hughes, p 84ff
- 133 G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, London 1953, pp 48f
- 134 Ibid.
- 135 It is interesting that B. Metzger in his *Textual Commentary of the NT* does not find it necessary to give any consideration to this variant!
- 136 R.V.G. Tasker, *NTS* 1 1954-5, p 185
- 137 Accepting the addition of *καὶ κατεστῆσας αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου* in v 7 would only serve to reinforce the 'not yet' of v 8. However, the case for the variant's being original is not strong.
- 138 See below, p 92, and cf. Peterson's understanding of the phrase in Hebrews
- 139 For the translation of *βραχύ* as 'for a time', see e.g. Kistemaker, *Commentary*, p 64f. For the view that it is to be understood in terms of degree, see e.g. Westcott p 44
- 140 Philo, *de op. Mundi* 28, commenting on Gen. 1:26
- 141 cf. 1 Cor. 15:24-28
- 142 F.F. Bruce, *Commentary*, p 38f.
- 143 See pp. 106, 107
- 144 cf. e.g. 1 Cor. 9:25; 2 Tim. 2:5; 4:7, 8; James 1:12; Rev. 2:10
- It is interesting that the first Christian martyr was called Στεφάνος.
- 145 Those who see this connection include Wairne, p 70, and A.B. Bruce, pp 79ff
- 146 A.M. Ramsey, *Glory and Transfiguration* p 44f
- 147 Westcott, *Commentary* p 45
- 148 Alford's *Greek Testament*, Vol. IV Pt I, p 37
- 149 Snell, op. cit., p 62f
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- 150 cf. his use of Ps. 45:6-7 at 1:8-9, possibly alluding indirectly to the figure of Melchizedek
- 151 L.S. Thornton, *Revelation and the Modern World*, London 1950, p 162 with n. 5
- 152 L.S. Thornton, *The Dominion of Christ*, London 1952, p 79
See also chapter 3 above p 87 (Adam) and pp 82-4 (servant)
- 153 cf. Moffatt, p 24
- 154 Most commentators seem to opt for this association
- 155 Spicq, *Commentary*, *ad loc.*
- 156 A.E. Garvie, *Exp. T.* xxvi (1914-15) p 549
- 157 See further the discussion in Moffatt, p 25 (where he rules out a Transfiguration interpretation)
- 158 P.E. Hughes, p 90
- 159 *Ibid.* cf. M. Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. III pp 345-7; C.F.D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, p 193f
- 160 cf. Hengel's argument that understanding of Jesus as $\pi\alpha\iota\varsigma$ by the early Church was influential in coming to perceive him as son, Son of God p 66
- 161 For a discussion of possible links between this phrase and the Akedah tradition, see Chapter 2 above p 61.
- 162 $\epsilon\pi\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ The verb is used in the LXX in the sense of to take hold of firmly, to seize, often for punitive or destructive purposes. It is used only once of God taking hold of to help, i.e. in the Jer. reference which Hebrews quotes at 8:9. Note also Sir. 4:11, where it is used of Wisdom taking hold of and helping those who seek her.
In the NT, its use is primarily Lukan (13 of the 19 instances of the verb come in Luke/Acts) and sometimes used of Jesus in bringing help in desperate situations. cf. Matt. 14:31
Compare $\alpha\nu\tau\iota\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ (take someone's part, help, come to the aid of), used only 3 times in the NT (Lk. 1:54; Acts 20:35; 1 Tim. 6:2). The instance at Lk. 1:54 is very closely linked with Is. 41:8. The RSV translation is surely too weak.
- 163 See the discussion in P.E. Hughes, pp 115-9
- 164 See also the discussion of Hebrews' Adam Christology in chapter 3 p 87 and chapter 4 pp 105-6
- 165 See above pp 162-6
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- 166 So, e.g. Snell, O. Procksch,^(TWN.T. i, p. 113) Those who think it refers to God include Chrysostom, Delitzsch, Westcott, Moffatt, Spicq, F.F. Bruce, Montefiore. P.E. Hughes (p 105) discounts either interpretation and suggests treating the pronoun as neuter, so "relating primarily to the community of human nature which binds the incarnate Son to us". Buchanan (p 32) says "'From one" probably means from one father, namely Abraham."
- 167 See above chapter 3 pp 92-5, where we suggested that the name 'Jesus' was the basic substance of the community's 'confession' (understood in liturgical terms) to which our author was seeking to add the designation 'High Priest'.
- 168 See above p 93
- 169 See above pp 87, 82-4, 89-91
- 170 See above chapter 4 p 113
- 171 See above p 173

- 1 F.F. Bruce, p 32.
 - 2 Origen, in Joan.1.35 [italics mine].
Origen reads $\tau\omicron\hat{\upsilon}$ before $\upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho$
 - 3 Gnomon *ad loc.*
 - 4 Quoted by Moffatt, p 27.
 - 5 As n. 4 above.
 - 6 See R.V.G. Tasker, The Text of the 'Corpus Paulinum', p 184.
 - 7 Tasker, art. cit., p 184.
 - 8 F.F. Bruce, p 32.
 - 9 Some feel that the original gloss was on 2:8, others on 2:9 (*minus* $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\tau\epsilon$). In either case, the gloss must have been incorporated in the text of 2:9 at a very early stage if it was changed to the easier $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\tau\epsilon$ by the time of p46.
 - 10 Tasker, art. cit. p 184.
 - 11 cf. 4:15; 7:7, 20; 9:7, 18, 22; 10:28; 11:6; 12:8, 14. At 9:28 and 11:40, it may have the sense of 'separation'.
 - 12 Delitzsch, vol. I p 115.
 - 13 P.E. Hughes, p 96.
 - 14 See Moffatt p 26.
 - 15 See n. 14 above.
 - 16 see n. 14 above.
 - 17 cf. our thesis that the author is 'urgently seeking to communicate his belief that in Jesus, God has gone through a totally human experience including death.
 - 18 So, e.g. A. Harnack, Studien zur Geschichte des NT, I, Berlin 1931, pp 235ff., G. Zuntz, The Text of the Epistles, p 34, A. Snell, p 63, H.W. Montefiore, p 59, J.K. Elliott, Jesus Apart from God (Heb. 2:9), Exp. T. 83, 1972, pp 339-41.
 - 19 Snell, p 63.
 - 20 Zuntz, op. cit., p 43ff, takes it as original but Metzger, Textual Commentary, p 662, thinks it " more likely that $\delta\iota'\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ or $\delta\iota'\epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ was added in order to enhance the force of the middle voice of $\pi\omicron\lambda\upsilon\sigma\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$, than that the phrase was present originally and then omitted."
 - 21 See above pp 109-12.
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- 22 See F.F. Bruce, p 100 n. 51.
- 23 Montefiore, p 59.
- 24 Snell, p 63.
- 25 Montefiore, p 59.
- 26 Elliott, art. cit.
- 27 cf. V. Taylor, Mark, p 594 : "The view... that Jesus, as a substitute for sinners, was forsaken by the Father is inconsistent with the love of God and the oneness of purpose with the Father manifest in the atoning ministry of Jesus". He quotes Glover, The Jesus of History, p 192: "I have sometimes thought there never was an utterance that reveals more amazingly the distance between feeling and fact".
- 28 Montefiore, p 59.
- 29 cf. Westcott, p 422.
- 30 See above pp 101-2.
- 31 F. Young, Can These Dry Bones Live?, p 60f.
- 32 Spicq II, ad loc.
- 33 cf. Moffatt, p 26.
- 34 Hughes, p 93.
- 35 cf. Gal. 3:16ff, where the Seed of Abraham equals Christ and therefore all those who, hearing with faith, are in Christ - Gentiles, Jews, slave, free, male, female. Potentially, therefore, it involves the whole of mankind.
- 36 The $\epsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ of v 10 must surely refer to God. So all the major commentaries.
- 37 $\epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$. We do not find the word in the LXX applied to God, though Spicq (I, p 53) notes that it appears in Philo (Leg. Alleg.1.48; Age of the World, 41) and Josephus (Apion ii.168). Snell, p 65, compares "the habitual practice in the OT prophets of arguing from God's character to what he will do". In the NT it is only used of God here (cf. its use of believers at 7:26).
- 38 p 185. cf. the widely held conviction that 'many' in Is. 53 = all. Jewish use often had the sense of 'all.' See particularly J. Jeremias, Eucharistic Words, pp 179-82.
- 39 See above, p 105f.
- 40 A. Weiser, The Psalms, ET London 1962, p 144 [my italics].
- 41 T.E. Fretheim, The Suffering of God, an OT Perspective, Philadelphia 1984.
- 42 Ibid. p 127.

- 43 See, e.g. Judges 2:18; Pss. 16:8; 23:4; 34:6-7, 18; 73:21-28; 91:15; Jer. 31:20. cf. Fretheim, op. cit. pp 127-37.
- 44 See chapter 5, note 14 above.
- 45 L.S. Thornton, The Doctrine of the Atonement, p 112f.
- 46 Peterson, Perfection, p 101f.
cf. Westcott, pp 49f and Vanhoye, Situation, p 321 p.
- 47 Peterson, op. cit., p 85, 52.
- 48 W.R.G. Loader, Christ at the Right Hand, art. cit., p 207.
- 49 G. Johnston, art. cit. p 384 & p 382.
- 50 Ibid. p 381.
- 51 The word occurs primarily in the Pentateuch (particularly Numbers), Judges and Chronicles. It is used once of God (Jer. 3:4 - ἄρχηγὸν τῆς παρθενίας σου). For the sense of tribal rulers, see e.g. Ex. 6:14; Num. 10:4; 13:3; 16:2; Deut. 33:21; Judges 5:15; 1 Chron. 5:24; 26:26; Neh. 7:70, 71.
- 52 So, e.g. Judges 11:6; 2 Chron. 23:14; Neh. 2:9.
- 53 Westcott, p 49.
- 54 32 out of 54 references. In Ex., Lev., Num. and Deut., it is used almost entirely in this sense.
- 55 For an illuminating discussion of the meaning of κατεπαυοῖς, see C.K. Barrett, Eschatology of Hebrews, p 366-73. See also N. Turner, Christian Words, p 388f.
- 56 See e.g. Is. 43:15-17; 51:9-11.
- 57 See Moffatt, p 31, Peterson, pp 57-8.
- 58 See above Chapter 4 pp 137-8.
- 59 See pp 127ff above with notes. The birth image is often associated with judgement, cf. F. Young, Can these Dry Bones Live, p 43ff.
The image reappears in the NT. At several points it is used to signify the Christian conviction that new life is brought out of suffering, cf. e.g. Mk. 13:8; Jn. 16:21, 22; 1 Thess. 5:3; Rev. 12:2-5; Rom. 8:22, 23. Compare also 1QH 6-18 with its reference to the birth-pangs of the Messiah.
We should note also the idea that new Christians are 'new-born babes', cf. 1 Pet 2:2 and compare Heb. 5:12, 13. The Johannine literature talks of believers being both ἄνωθεν (Jn. 3:3-8) or born of God (1 Jn. 3:9).
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- 60 cf. F. Young, op. cit. p 47. She points particularly to Is. 42:14-16 and compares Deut. 32:18 "where the Hebrew verb for a woman giving birth, and travailing in the process, is used of God bearing Israel and giving birth to his own people".
- 61 Fretheim, op. cit., p 147.
- 62 L.S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ, London 1941 p 379.
- 63 Loader, art. cit. p 207.
- 64 See above pp 67-69.
- 65 cf. Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:26. As G.J. Wenham puts it, "Holiness characterizes God himself and all that belongs to him... God's name, which expresses his character, is holy... Holiness is intrinsic to God's character" (The Book of Leviticus, Grand Rapids 1979, p 22). See further his whole section on holiness, pp 18-25.
- 66 See e.g. O.S. Rankin's article on 'Saint, Holy, Divine' in TWVB, pp 214-16
- 67 The verb occurs across a wide range of NT traditions, as does the concept of God's holiness and its consequences for his people. On the latter, see especially 1 Pet. 1:15, 16.
- 68 Westcott, p 50.
- 69 J.K.S. Reid, in TWVB, pp 216ff, at p 218.
- 70 For a summary discussion, see Peterson p 59f.
- 71 cf. Moffatt. p 32, "Jesus is assigned the divine prerogative of ἁγιάζειν"
It is interesting to compare the Johannine usage of ἁγιάζω (10:36; 17:17, 19). Of interest, too, in the Fourth Gospel are the phrase 'those whom thou hast given me' (17:6, 9, 12) and Jesus' use of 'brethren' (20:17) and 'children' (13:33; 21:5) to describe his disciples.
- 72 We should also take note of Peterson's insight that ἁγιάζω in Heb. is also closely related to the establishment of the new covenant. He says, (p 59) "The verb in Hebrews is essentially associated with the establishment of New Covenant relations between God and man". He rightly criticizes the NEB translation of 2:11 for making the priestly implications explicit before the author does.
- 73 See D. Moo, The Old Testament in the Passion Narratives, pp 264-75 and notes.
- 74 It is interesting that Jesus is said to speak these words himself. There is no fulfilment formula as, e.g., in Matt. Compare 10:5ff and cf.
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- ascription of words of scripture to the Holy Spirit at 3:7, 10, 15. Throughout the Epistle, God is presented as speaking directly through Scripture to his Son or his people (e.g. 1:5ff; 4:3-5; 5:5, 6; 6:13f; 10:30; 12:26; 13:5).
- 75 P.E. Hughes (p 109) criticizes F.F. Bruce for pressing the analogy with Isaiah too far so as to make the 'children' in Heb. 2:13 children of Christ. Our author's Christology, however, strongly implies that it is not an "either..or" situation. In a metaphorical sense, we might compare Paul's comment concerning the Galatian Christians: "My little children, with whom I am again in travail..." (Gal. 4:19). A few verses before and after he is describing them as "brethren" (vv 12, 28).
- 76 cf. John's Gospel, where Jesus is represented as addressing disciples as both $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha$ (e.g. 21:5) and $\alpha\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\omicron\iota$ (20:17).
See also Mk. 10:24 ($\tau\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\nu\alpha$).
- 77 At 2 Cor. 13:3, 5, much hangs on the translation of $\epsilon\nu$: in or among?
See Barrett, Commentary, pp 335, 338.
Compare also Lk. 22:27: $\epsilon\gamma\omega \delta\epsilon \epsilon\nu \mu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omega \upsilon\mu\omega\nu \epsilon\iota\mu\iota \omega\varsigma \delta\epsilon \delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\omega\nu$.
- 78 See discussion on this passage in chapter 3 above p 67.
- 79 So Barrett, Lindars, etc.
- 80 Such must surely be the implication of the plural and the overall context.
- 81 Jesus will presumably speak "boldly" concerning the Father through the Paraclete.
- 82 Westcott, p 80.
- 83 See pp 92-5.
- 84 God and the Holy Spirit are also believed to speak through the same medium with the same immediacy, cf. n. 74 above.
- 85 See further below, pp 247-58.
- 86 See, e.g. D. Hill, New Testament Prophecy.
- 87 See G.B. Caird, Revelation, *ad loc.*
- 88 See above pp 96-9.
- 89 See above pp 176-79.
- 90 Westcott, p 56.
- 91 See further chapter 7 below.

- 92 W. Horbury, *The Aaronic Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, JSNT Oct 1983, pp 43-71, points to targumic and rabbinic material which associated Levi and Aaron in particular with 'ethical' qualities such as kindness and peace (pp 60-61). The point remains, however, that in the Septuagintal material such an association is not explicit and not described by the word ἐλεῖμνος. The overwhelming connotation of the word would point to a quality of God.
- Philo (de Spec, Leg. 1.115) said a high priest should not show human affections.
- 93 LXX Ex. 22:7; 34:6; 2 Chron. 30:9; Neh. 9:17, 31; Ps. 85:15; Ps. 102:8; Ps. 110:4; Ps. 111:4; Ps. 114:5; Ps. 144:8; Prov. 11:17; 19:11; 20:6; 28:22; Jer. 3:12; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2.
- 94 Of God: Ex. 22:27; 34:6; 2 Chron. 30:9; Neh. 9:17, 31; Ps. 85:15; Ps. 102:8; Ps. 110:4; Ps. 114:5; Ps. 144:8; Jer. 3:12; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2.
- Of a merciful man: Ps. 111:4; Prov. 11:17; 19:11; 20:6; 28:22.
- 95 ἔλεος occurs 242 times in LXX, 188 of these instances referring to God. Note especially Deut. 7:9; Ps. 32:4, 5; Lam. 3:22, 23; Hos. 2:19, 20, where mercy is closely linked with faithfulness.
- 96 The verbs occur 105 times in LXX, 81 times of God (as one who does or does not have mercy).
- 97 cf. e.g. Mt. 17:15; Lk. 17:13; 2 Tim. 1:2; Jude 21.
- 98 μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.
- 99 See Westcott, p 56. There seems little compelling reason for assuming that 'merciful' applies to the High Priest's relations with humanity and 'faithful' to his relations with God (so e.g. Montefiore, p 67).
- 100 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor. 1:18; 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:13; Heb. 2:17; 3:2; 10:23; 11:11; 1 Pet. 4:19; 1 Jn. 1:9; Rev. 1:5; 3:14; 19:11
- 101 Heb. 3:2; 11:11; 1 Pet. 4:19 may also reflect commonly used formulae.
- 102 G. French-Beytagh, *A Glimpse of Glory*, London 1986, pp 48-9.
- 103 Πιστοὶ is used frequently in the NT to refer to 'believers'. Compare the emphasis in Hebrews on ^{the} endurance and steadfastness of followers of the faithful one.
- Many commentators have distinguished merciful and faithful by, in effect, attaching 'mercy' to Jesus' 'divine' aspect and 'faithfulness' to his human

- ministry (cf. n. 99 above). This is an artificial division if the incarnate Jesus really is God's integrated self-expression.
- 104 See L.H. Brockington, I and II Samuel in Peake's Commentary (p 320).
- 105 Jesus' 'house' = God's house = the household of believers = the new Temple? See below pp 215-17.
- 106 Montefiore, Commentary p 120.
- 107 Hughes, Commentary p 120.
- 108 So e.g. Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Spicq.
- 109 Migne PG vol. 82 696c.
- 110 W.H.G. Holmes, p 28.
- 111 Ibid. p 30.
- 112 See below pp 206-9 for discussion of this verb.
- 113 Westcott, p 130.
- 114 Ibid. See particularly his commentary on Heb. 7.
- 115 See especially pp 233-36.
- 116 It is true, certainly, that a resurrection reference is included, reinforced by the word ἀνίσταται in the preceding verse.
- 117 See above p 124f.
- 118 See above p 101f, 204.
- 119 In all instances of ἰλάσκομαι in the LXX, God is the subject, the one responsible for the action. (Ex. 32:14; 2 Kings 5:18 (x 2); 24:4; 2 Chron. 6:30; Pss. 24:11; 64:3; 77:38; 78:9; Lam. 3:41; Dan. 9:19)
- See further C.H. Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks, London 1953, pp 82ff; D. Hill, Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings (Studies in the Semantics of Soteriological Terms), Cambridge 1967: "The verb ἰλάσκομαι occurs in Heb. 2:17, but the context provides no reference to the wrath of God. The verb is followed by the accusative (referring to sin) - εἰς τὸ ἰλᾶσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ - and it is urged that this construction indicates that 'to expiate' is the meaning of the term here" (p 38).
- 120 H. Turner, Christian Words p 277.
- We may compare the way in which *kipper* is frequently used in the DSS with God as subject in the sense of to forgive. See E.P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, p 298f.
- 121 L. Morris, The Cross in the New Testament, Exeter, pap. ed. 1976, p 299.
- 122 Turner, op. cit. p 278.
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- 123 Delitzsch p 149.
- 124 Hughes, p 122: "God himself has met the demands of his own holiness. He has, so to speak, propitiated himself in our place".
- 125 As Westcott (p 57) puts it, "The essential conception is that of altering that in the character of an object which necessarily excludes the action of the grace of God".
- 126 Among the few commentators who draw attention to the present tense are Westcott (p 57) and Montefiore (p 68).
- 127 Aorists v 17: ὁμοιωθῆναι, γένηται v 18 πειρασθεῖς, βοηθήσαι
Perfects v 18 πέπονθεν.
- 128 Montefiore, p 68.
- 129 vv 1-4 Presents: λαμβανόμενος, καθίσταται, προσφέρει, μετριοπαθεῖν, ὀφείλω,
vv 5-10 Aorists: προσφέρειν, λαμβάνει, καλούμενος.
εδοξασεν, γένηθῆναι Perfects γεγέννηκα
- 130 Westcott, p 57 λαλῶντας etc.
- 131 T.S. Eliot, Little Gidding, (pp 213, 212 of Collected Poems, London 1974).
- 132 πειράζω in LXX and NT consistently has the sense of "testing".
- 133 cf. Matt. 4:1, 3; Mk. 1:13; Lk. 4:2; 1 Cor. 7:5; 1 Thess. 3:5; Rev. 2:10
- 134 16 times of God's testing of his people, 8 times of their testing of him (out of a total of 39 instances).
- 135 Jn. 6:6 (Jesus testing Philip); Heb. 11:17 (Abraham, by implication tested by God); Rev. 3:10? (does God send the 'hour of trial?'); for God's people testing him, see Acts 5:9; 15:10; 1 Cor. 10:9.
- 136 See e.g. Matt. 16:1; 19:3; 22:18, 35; Mk. 8:11; 10:2; 12:15; 11:16; Jn. 8:6.
- 137 At 11:37, some MSS add "they were tested".
- 138 See above pp 101f.
- 139 Most of the 29 references are to be found in Psalms and Isaiah.
- 140 See further below p 250ff with notes.
- 141 J. Goldingay, The Spirituality of Preaching, Exp. T., April 1987, vol 98 no 7 pp 197-203.
- 142 Such is the burden of our author's language and imagery.
- 143 See further below pp 250ff.
- 144 L.S. Thornton, Doctrine of the Atonement, p 107.

- 1 A.B. Bruce, Commentary p 10f.
- 2 See chapter 4.
- 3 See above p 113.
- 4 See above p 134.
- 5 םֶלֶךְ is omitted in p¹³ p⁴⁶ B. Its insertion may have been to bring it into line with v.5.
- 6 cf. F.F. Bruce (p 57): "No distinction can be made between the Father and the Son in this regard; God the Father, the Maker of all things, is inevitably the founder of His own household, and it was through his Son that He brought into being all things in general and His own household in particular".
- 7 cf. e.g. 2 Sam. 7, 1 Kings 8, among many references to the Temple as a 'house' in the LXX. Compare the Qumran Community's understanding of themselves as God's house, in the sense of household and new Temple; cf. 4Q Flor.
- 8 At 14:2 the same phrase is used of heaven.
- 9 cf C.K. Barrett, John, *ad loc.*
- 10 Nothing in v 14 suggests that sonship and high priesthood are to be thought of as separate categories - or that high priesthood was a recent appointment. In any case, *at this point*, our author is thinking of an integrated vocation.
- 11 See above pp 102-123.
- 12 See further below pp 236-46.
- 13 See below pp 225-30.
- 14 a 5:1 b 5:2, 3 c 5:4 d 5:5, 6 b 5:7, 8 a 5: 9, 10.
- 15 P.E. Hughes, p 180.
- 16 Peterson, Perfection p 84, quoting Moffatt p 64.
- 17 See above pp 124f.
- 18 Westcott p 130.
- 19 See also e.g. 1:1-4.
- 20 Sons of Aaron are rather identified as just that, e.g. Ex. 28:1; 38:21; Lev. 10:16.
- 21 See esp. pp 104f, 134, 169ff.
- 22 See above pp 167ff.
- 23 See above pp 178ff.

- 24 p 105.
- 25 See above p 134.
- 26 Such a notion is widely attested in the NT, not least through the use of Ps. 110:1, a psalm verse clearly familiar to our author.
- 27 Such comes through clearly in the opening two chapters. See chapters 4-6 above.
- 28 See especially pp 105-6; 129; 156; 164-7; 174; 177-9.
- 29 cf. Barrett, *From First Adam to Last*, London 1962, pp 1-21.
- 30 See above pp 191-2.
- 31 For a study of the use of this formula in Greek literature, see J. Coste, *Notion grecque et notion biblique de la "souffrance éducatrice" à propos d'Hébreux 5:8*, *Recherches de science religieuse* 43, 1955, pp 481-523.
- 32 Coste, art. cit. p 496, shows that this was the main burden of the formula in secular Greek literature. cf. also OT passages like Prov. 3:11f; 15:5.
- 33 cf. G.Vos, *The Priesthood of Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, PTR 5 (1907), p 585: there was a need for the Son "to bring into the conscious experience of action, that which is present as an avowed principle antecedent to the action. There is a difference between the desire and resolve to obey and the carrying through of this attitude of mind in the concrete circumstances of life, whilst natural inclinations assert themselves in the opposite direction". Coste, art. cit., concludes that the existing background of the phrase cannot fully explain its usage at Heb. 5:8, where it has an "irreducible originality". Though this may be true in terms of outcome, the reader of Hebrews must have in mind that Jesus was made like his brethren in every respect (2:17) and that this involved knowing that 'testing' common to humanity (4:15).
- 34 cf. F.F. Bruce, p 246: "It can scarcely be doubted that the "veil" of which our author is thinking is the inner veil which separated the holy place from the holy of holies."
- 35 Early commentators (including Chrysostom and, later, Calvin) regarded the veil of Christ's flesh as something that 'veiled' his divinity. F.F. Bruce, however, in stressing that our author is using the Day of Atonement imagery, suggests the "The veil which, from one point of view, kept God and man apart, can be thought of, from another point of view, as

- bringing them together; for it was one and the same veil which on one side was in contact with the glory of God and on the other side with the need of men". cf. N.A. Dahl, *A New and Living Way*, pp 405. See further Chapter 2 n. 106.
- 36 cf. P.E. Hughes, p 406, "The expression $\tau\acute{\alpha} \acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\nu$ designates, once again, the innermost sanctuary of the holy of holies", here, "that is, the true heavenly sanctuary." For $\tau\acute{\alpha} \acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\nu$ as holy of holies see also 9:8, 12, 24, 25; 13:11.
- 37 See e.g. pp 82f.
- 38 Buchanan, p 98f.
- 39 Peterson, p 94
- 40 See e.g. F.F. Bruce, p xlix.
- 41 cf, e.g. Moses p 50-52, Michael and other angels pp 41ff.
- 42 See Peterson p 94; cf, F.F. Bruce p 158f.
- 43 See above p 82-4.
- 44 F.F. Bruce, p 205f. cf. Kistemaker, p 251.
- 45 Montefiore, p 154f, following e.g. Westcott, Moffatt and Spicq, takes it as referring not to the Holy Spirit, but to Christ's eternal nature. Those understanding the phrase as referring to the Holy Spirit include Calvin, Vaughan, F.F. Bruce, Kistemaker.
- 46 See e.g. D. Hill, *Matthew*, p 97f; W.L. Lane, *Mark*, p 57f; I.H. Marshall, *Luke*, pp 154-7.
- 47 A. Richardson, *NT Theology* p 222.
- 48 See W.G. Morrice, *Covenant*, Exp. T. 86, 1974-5.
- 49 See above pp 141-50.
- 50 The concept of a new covenant appears at a number of points elsewhere in the NT, notably Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6.
See discussion above at pp 95f.
- 51 See above p 134.
- 52 Our author surely thinks of Melchizedek in terms of scriptural pointer rather than as an actual eternally existent being. Melchizedek is for him a scriptural type, not a speculative reality.
- 53 "The argument from silence plays an important part in rabbinical interpretation of scripture where (for exegetical purposes) nothing must be

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- regarded as having existed before the time of its first biblical mention". F.F. Bruce, p 136. Philo used the argument from silence extensively.
- 54 See discussion above pp 220f.
- 55 Wickham, Commentary, p xxii.
- 56 See above pp 185f.
- 57 cf. Jn. 8:56-58; Rom. 4:18; Heb. 11:12.
- 58 cf. e.g. S. Sandmel, Judaism and Christian Beginnings, p 41f.
- 59 See discussion in chapter 2 above pp 29-31.
- 60 Moffatt, p xlii-xliii. cf. E.F. Scott, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Edinburgh 1922, p 124: "We cannot but feel, as the writer elaborates his analogy, that he is engaged in pouring new wine into old bottles, which are burst under the strain. To discover the meaning of Christianity he falls back on ceremonies and institutions which belonged wholly to the past, and which the new spiritual religion had deliberately set aside."
- 61 J.L. Houlden, Priesthood in the NT and the Church Today, p 83.
- 62 See further below pp 247ff.
- 63 Peterson, p 128.
- 64 See chapter 6 n. 92.
- 65 See also Pss. 23:1; 80:1.
- 66 The one in and through whom God speaks his definitive word.
- 67 See n. 45 above.
- 68 Sinning against the Holy Spirit is also referred to at Matt. 12:31, 32; Mk. 3:29; Lk. 12:10; Eph. 4:30.
- 69 Wainwright, The Trinity in the NT, p 256.
- 70 Interestingly, little attention seems to be given in the commentaries to the relationship between the Spirit's and Christ's intercession.
- 71 So, e.g. P.E. Hughes, Montefiore, Calvin ("it belongs to a priest to intercede, in order that the people may find favour with God"), Spicq.
- 72 Montefiore, p 129.
- 73 On Michael, see S-B III, p 532 (and p 42 above). On Moses, see pp 50-52 above. On Abraham, see especially Gen. 18:16-23.
- 74 See above chapter 6 p 211.
- 75 A.M. Ramsey, Be Still and Know, London 1982, p 54.
The verb is not used in the LXX. cf. Westcott, Commentary p 192.
- 76 Peterson, p 249 n 75 .
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- 77 Ibid.
- 78 See above p 125f.
- 79 R. Williamson, Hebrews and Doctrine, p 374.
- 80 cf. e.g. p 185 above .
- 81 See above p 187f with notes. cf. Fretheim, op. cit..
- 82 Peterson, p 82.
- 83 L.S. Thornton, Doctrine of the Atonement, p 107.
- 84 Ibid.
- 85 We may compare Houlden's suggestion that in Rom. 3:4 the priesthood image is "applied momentarily to God himself" (J.L. Houlden, Priesthood in the NT and the Church Today, p 83).
- 86 Delitzsch vol I, p 149.
- 87 P.E. Hughes, p 122.
See discussion above p p 206f.
- 88 So he frequently calls out younger sons (e.g. David) and chooses to perform his will those who feel unequal to the task (e.g. Moses, Gideon, Jeremiah).
- 89 A not inconsiderable number of commentators, from Tertullian onwards, have ascribed authorship to Barnabas the Levite. See F.F. Bruce, p xxxvii n. 62 for list.
- 90 cf. the confusion about the location of the "incense altar" at 9:4.
- 91 A number of candidates for authorship have been put forward as well as Barnabas, notably Apollos (so Luther, Spicq, Montefiore), Luke (so Calvin, Delitzsch), Priscilla and Aquila (so Harnack).
- 92 See discussion in Chapter 3, p 80f.
- 93 cf. how frequently he uses the name and its emphatic position.
- 94 See discussion on pp 107-109 above
- 95 See F. Young, Can These Dry Bones Live?, p 74f, where she points out that the spiritualization of the concept of sacrifice was already well-advanced by the time of the NT.
- 96 F.F. Bruce, p xlviii.
- 97 Ibid. p 1.
- 98 Buchanan, p 246.
- 99 G. Zuntz, The Text of the Epistles, p 286.
- 100 G.B. Caird, Oxford University Lecture, March 1974.
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- 101 A, Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship*, p 100.
 - 102 cf. R. Beckwith, *Daily and Weekly Worship: Jewish and Christian*, Exeter 1987, p 19, n. 36 with references. See also J. Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, Cambridge 1969, p 72f; L. Morris, *The Gospels and the Jewish Lectionaries*, in 'Gospel Perspectives', vol III (Studies in Midrash and Historiography), Sheffield 1983, pp 129-56. Morris concludes (p 148), "it appears that there is still a long way to go before any lectionary hypothesis can be said to be probable".
 - 103 On synagogue preaching, see e.g. Bowker, *op. cit.* pp 72-7.
 - 104 cf. e.g. Hypotheticks 7:12f; Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit 81f
 - 105 R. Beckwith, *op. cit.*, p 18f. He points to Lk. 4:16-17; Acts 13:14-43; 15:21; Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 2:216; *De Spec. Leg.* 2:62f; Quod Omnis 80-82; *De Vita Cont.* 30-33; Hypothetica 7:12f; *De Leg, ad Gaium* 156f; Josephus *Ant.*, 16:43, 164; *Against Apion* 1:209; 2:175.
 - 106 Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 67: "the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things." Here the reading of *christian* scriptures has been incorporated. cf. *Apostolic Constitutions* 2:57, which suggests two readings from the OT and two from the New (separated by Psalms) followed by a series of sermons!
 - 107 His precise exegetical model is open to debate. Some, for example, discern many features which are also apparent in the Qumran writings. For an examination of this latter, see e.g. F.F. Bruce, 'To the Hebrews' or 'To the Essenes'? NTS 9 (1962-3) pp 217-32. On Hebrews' use of the OT generally, see G. Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, Cambridge 1979, esp. pp 47-66. Note also M. D'Angelo, *Moses*, p 260f, with her important encapsulation of our author's interpretative method: "Thus for the author of Hebrews, the principle of exegesis is Christ".
 - 108 F.F. Bruce, p 413.
 - 109 cf. D. Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, London 1957, p 97.
 - 110 D. Hill, *NT Prophecy* p 128.
 - 111 *op. cit.* p 129.
 - 112 Philo, *Hypothetica* 7:13.
 - 113 Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.209.
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- 114 v 22 must surely apply to the whole Epistle. See the discussion of contrary views (held by Overbeck, Wrede, Vanhoye) in F.V. Filson, Yesterday - A Study of Hebrews in the Light of Chap. 13, London 1967, p 28f. Filson concludes, "the writer's informal, but apt designation of 1:1-13:21 as his 'word of exhortation' is entirely in place and is suited to the context".
- 115 Kistemaker, Commentary p 434.
- 116 C.P.M. Jones, The Eucharist in the New Testament, in 'The Study of Liturgy', London 1978, ed. C.P.M. Jones, G. Wainwright, E.J. Yarnold, p 166. R.P.C. Hanson, Eucharistic Offering in the Early Church, Bramcote 1979; J. Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, A.J.B. Higgins, The Lord's Supper in the New Testament, London 1952; R. Williams, Eucharistic Sacrifice - the Roots of a Metaphor, Bramcote 1982.
- On Eucharist in the NT, see also, e.g. [Jeremias, Higgins, R. Williams] I.H. Marshall, Luke, pp 799-807, D. Moo, The OT in the Gospel Passion Narratives, Sheffield 1983, pp 301-11.
- 117 Jones, op. cit. p 166.
- 118 A number of scholars see an allusion to baptism in 10:19-23. So Westcott, Christus Consummator, p 70f and J.A.T. Robinson, Twelve NT Studies, London 1962. Robinson says, "The effect of the Crucifixion is here expressed in terms which, derived originally from Jewish purification rites, carry in Christian parlance obvious baptismal associations" (p 171).
- 119 R. Williamson, The Background of the Epistle to the Hebrews, p 232.
- 120 Montefiore, p 109. On p 30 he describes our Epistle as "a strictly non-liturgical work."
- 121 So e.g. Héring. F.F. Bruce (p 121) also feels that "it may indicate the whole sum of spiritual blessings which are sacramentally sealed and signified in the eucharist".
- 122 So, e.g. Spicq, Michel. J. Swetnam 'The Greater and More Perfect Tent'. A Contribution to the Discussion of Heb. 9:11, Biblica 47 (1966), pp 91-106, sees a eucharistic allusion at 9:11.
- 123 So A.H. Couratin, The sacrifice of Praise, Theology 58 (Aug. 1955), pp 285-9 at p 286; O. Michel, Der Brief an die Hebräer, Göttingen 1960,

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- p 210; J. Jeremias, Eucharistic words, p 170; D. Moo, OT in Gospel Passion Narratives, p 304.
- 124 D. Moo, op. cit. p 306.
- 125 See discussion in D. Moo, op. cit. pp 302ff. Note 'rival claim' of Zechariah 9:11 (see Lindars, Apologetic, pp 132-3). Jeremias and Higgins do not regard the covenant connection as original.
- 126 The Lukan addition of 'new' (Lk. 22:20) makes this explicit and is surely a sign of what is strongly implicit in Mk. and Matt.
- 127 cf. Moo, op. cit., p 309.
- 128 Ibid. p 311.
- 129 Note how the words used cover all types of sacrifice. See chapter 2 n. 22 above.
- 130 See above pp 196-99 for a discussion of Jesus 'in the midst'. cf. Higgins, Lord's Supper, p 62f.
- 131 So e.g. J.A.T. Robinson (Twelve NT Studies, p 172), F.F. Bruce, Montefiore, P.E. Hughes, Kistemaker argue for a broader interpretation.
 $\phi\omega\tau\iota\varsigma\mu\epsilon\lambda\omega\varsigma$ was certainly a technical term for Christian baptism from the second century onwards (cf. Justin Martyr, Apology, 61.12-13).
- 132 The baptized experiencing 'the ministry of word and sacrament' and, perhaps in that context, new age 'signs and wonders' (cf. the Corinthian Church).
- 133 On this verse, see especially F.F. Bruce, p 111 n. 7 and p 124 with n. 57. However, precisely, one interprets it (as 'crucify' or 'crucify again'), it clearly reflects a situation of the utmost seriousness.
- 134 It is interesting that the Spirit is involved in both warnings against apostasy.
- 135 See, e.g. Beckwith, op. cit., pp 27-30.
- 136 E. Trocmé, The Passion as Liturgy, London 1983 p 82
- 137 In Jub. VI.19 the Lord is recorded as saying to Moses, "in your days the children of Israel forgot it until you renewed it for them on this mountain".
- 138 See J. Potin, La fête juive de la Pentecôte, 2 vols, Paris 1971; S. Sandmel, Judaism and Christian Beginnings, pp 217-8
- 139 Interestingly, Irenaeus seems to talk of the Eucharist as a Christian version of the Feast of Weeks. In Adv. Haereses IV 17.5, Christians are
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enjoined to offer the *primitiae* (first-fruits) of creation and they are nourished by the *primitiae* of his gifts in the new covenant. As R. Williams puts it, "it is possible that a connection is being made between Christ's words about the new covenant in his blood and the first-fruits offering as a covenant renewal ceremony" (*Eucharistic Sacrifice*, p 9 n. 4.).

140 G.J. Brooke.op. cit. p 209.

141 Ibid. p 174.

142 Ibid. 169-74.

143 See pp 123, 129.

144 J.A. Draper, *The Heavenly Feast of Tabernacles*, Rev. 7:1-17, JSNT, Oct. 1983, pp 133-47 at p 133.

145 Ibid. p 147 n. 69

146 "After Solomon's dedication of the temple during this Feast (1 Kings 8), it came to be especially associated with the temple and with the theophany in the Jerusalem temple" Draper, op. cit. p 133.

147 cf. Deut. 31:9-13 which seems to enjoin a renewal of the covenant every seven years at the feast of booths.

See further M.A. Knibb, *The Qumran Community* p 88.

148 W.D. Maxwell, *An Outline of Christian Worship*, Oxford 1945, p 5.

149 J. Goldingay, *The Spirituality of Preaching*, Exp. T., April 1987, vol 98 no.7, pp 197-203

150 Goldingay, art. cit. p 202

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